

Loyalist political leaders seek to calm prisoners

Ulster faces fresh crisis

John Mulholland
Ireland Correspondent

NORTHERN Ireland was in danger of being engulfed in a full-scale crisis last night as loyalist political leaders tried to regain the initiative over prisoners demanding an end to their participation in the peace process at Stormont.

Loyalist prisoners snubbed desperate pleas to re-think their weekend vote instructing the fringe parties which represent them to pull out of the negotiations on Northern Ireland's future. That would spell the end of the three-year loyalist ceasefire, and signal a return to violence.

A flurry of meetings over the next five days will decide whether the loyalist fringe parties can stay in the multi-party talks, due to re-start on Monday. They will be able to do so only if the prisoners are persuaded to suspend judgment. If they do not, the loyalist ceasefire is over, warned Gary McMichael, leader of the Ulster Democratic Party.

He looked shattered after a two-hour meeting at the Maze prison with four leaders from the Ulster Defence Association and Ulster Freedom Fighters, the paramilitary groups his political party represents. "We are starting at dark and unstable days," he said. "The ground is crumbling beneath our feet."

Ulster Unionists also met loyalist prisoners. Deputy leader John Taylor said: "It is very serious. They are very concerned about the situation in Northern Ireland. He would not say whether he believed the ceasefire would last."

Mr McMichael denied the UDP was employing brinkmanship to force concessions from the Government. "We are not playing cards. We are not calling bluff. We are not manoeuvring. The situation is slipping away, though it's not quite gone yet." A UDP source admitted the situation was "dangerous".

Mr McMichael was last night arranging meetings with the UDA and UFF leadership outside prison. He believes that if they were to support the UDP's continued participation in the talks, then the loyalist prisoners would relent.

He said: "We told them we had given this process more than three years. It should be clear in a matter of weeks if a real settlement is a possibility, and we should stay at Stormont until then."

The UDP, whose delegation yesterday is thought to have included senior figures in the UDA and UFF, also wants to meet Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, today. It had talks with her on Monday, but wants to make new representations about alleviating the crisis.

The Ulster Volunteer Force, which is represented by the Progressive Unionist Party, last night outlined the confidence building measures it wanted to see. None is in the gift of the Government.

The UVF wants a statement from the IRA that the war is over, and assurances from the British and Irish governments that all prisoner issues would be debated in the talks' confidence-building committee. It demands that the Irish government says joint authority is not on its agenda, and that articles two and three of

its constitution, laying territorial claim to Northern Ireland, will be rescinded.

The impasse has its seeds in growing Unionist and loyalist frustration last month at what they see as the Government pursuing a republican agenda. They believe the confidence-building measures so far — on prisoners, parades, or security matters — favour Sinn Féin and the IRA. They are furious that while their ceasefire has lasted for more than three years, the IRA is still favoured despite calling off its ceasefire for 17 months.

The DUP, which is split on its continued participation in the talks, will meet David Andrews, the Irish foreign minister, in Belfast today. The Irish government's decision to release nine IRA prisoners early before Christmas infuriated the DUP. Dublin had the previous day assured the party that there would be no such no-warning moves.

The DUP executive will meet on Friday to discuss whether to stay in the talks. Sinn Féin stepped up the pressure on the Government after meeting Ms Mowlam yesterday. It warned her against "playing the Orange card" and blamed the problems on the Ulster Unionists for refusing to engage at Stormont.

Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin President, said: "Let everyone understand that those of us with a stake in the future have to be at the confidence table negotiating. It is those who hark back to the past, yesterday's men who want to hold on to the status quo, who are causing the serious crisis."

Roy Matthews, page 9

Heseltine 'would back Tory rebels in Euro poll'

Michael White
Political Editor

MICHAEL Heseltine is prepared to back a rebel slate of pro-European Conservatives in the crucial 1999 European elections if William Hague's advisers insist on a trial of strength to purge them from the candidates' list. Tory moderates warned yesterday.

As the Conservative leader said he would not be "blackmailed" over the single currency by threats such as this week's pro-European letter from 12 party grandees, it also emerged that the leader of his 18-strong group of MEPs will meet Mr Hague tomorrow to plead for compromise.

Edward McMillan-Scott, MEP for Yorkshire North, will warn that lightning plans to use the switch to proportional representation for the 1999 elections to indulge in "tactical ethnic cleansing" of pro-single currency Tories will result in disaster for the

party — and possibly for Mr Hague, whose first big electoral contest against Tony Blair it will be.

Ironically, the Tory fears mirror those of Labour MEPs, who yesterday met Tom Sawyer, the party's general secretary, to seek assurances that local activists will have some role in picking their European Parliament candidates and what position they occupy on the PR list, which will determine who gets elected.

The difference is that Mr Blair may purge his left, Mr Hague his moderates. Right-wingers such as Michael Howard are encouraging him to get the fight over early and prove himself a strong leader. Mr Hague seemed to endorse that view when he spoke to Radio 5 Live yesterday.

"I think they want to stay within the Conservative Party and I certainly want them to stay in the Conservative Party but I'm not going to be blackmailed by anybody. I'm not going to be held to ransom by anybody. Anybody

who says to me, 'You change your policy or I leave the party' — well the policy will stay the same."

The scale of disaffection in the leftwing Tory rump at Westminster and in Strasbourg was shown by this week's letter to the Independent, warning that Mr Heseltine and Kenneth Clarke will vote with Labour if Mr Blair comes up with "the right decisions" on the single currency, due to start between 1999 and 2001.

But allies of Mr Heseltine claim that his dismay at Mr Hague's insistence on ruling out British membership of the euro bloc for at least 10 years goes much deeper. If, as hardliners want, a draft European manifesto deploys the Hague line as a "loyalty test" to purge pro-European MEPs later this year, the party could split, they predict.

Mr Heseltine, on holiday in the Philippines, is said to have remarked in private: "If the worst comes to the worst I'll put up a slate of my own."

Pop star turned politician Sonny Bono dies



Bono... 'serious legislator and renaissance individual'

Martin Kettle
in Washington

SONNY BONO, the only politician in the United States Congress to have had a number one hit record, was killed yesterday in a skiing accident in California, aged 62.

Bono, an avid and experienced skier, died of head injuries after hitting a tree at the Heavenly Valley ski resort at Lake Tahoe in the Sierra Nevada mountains, where he was on holiday with his wife, Mary, and his two children.

He had just begun to ski alone through some trees adjoining the intermediate

Upper Orion slope in clear weather, resort officials said. There were no witnesses. Bono's body was found this Monday afternoon after he had been reported missing by his wife. An autopsy was scheduled for last night.

As the self-deprecating half of the Sonny and Cher duo in the 1960s, the moustachioed singer-songwriter sprang to fame with I Got You Babe, which reached number one in the UK charts in August 1965. After his show business career and his 10-year marriage to Cher collapsed in the 1970s, Bono built a new career in rightwing politics, becoming mayor of Palm Springs, California, in 1988 and win-

ning election to Congress in the Republican landslide of 1994.

Cher cut short a trip to London on hearing the news yesterday and flew to the US. Witnesses said she appeared shocked and tearful as she queued at Heathrow for a flight to New York, flanked by two police officers. Cher made no public comment.

The Stars and Stripes flew at half-mast on top of the US Congress in Washington as Bono's political mentor, New Gingrich, the Republican House of Representatives speaker, led the tributes. "This is a terrible shock," Mr Gingrich said. "He had really begun to develop, both as a mayor and then as a

member of Congress. People are going to miss him as a human being in ways that transcend politics."

Bono's press officer, Frank Cullen, said his late boss was "a renaissance individual and a serious legislator" as well as "a very proficient skier and an athletic guy". Bono's death came less than a week after Michael Kennedy, the 39-year-old son of the late Robert Kennedy, died in a skiing accident in Colorado. There was speculation in the American media yesterday about whether tighter controls were needed at ski resorts.

Obituary, page 10

Works locked in their utterly different worlds

Review

Andrew Clements

Cambridge New Music Players
BBC Radio Theatre

HEAR and Now has become Radio 3's main contemporary music slot and seems to be enjoying a charmed life, though how long it can survive in the network's current climate of remorseless popularisation remains to be seen. Yet its continued survival is absolutely vital: there is no other regular showcase for new work, and by bringing

together tapes and discs from a wide variety of sources it manages to represent an immense range of musical styles, some of which would never otherwise be heard in this country.

Usually the programme functions as a receiving house, but throughout January it is hosting its own series of concerts at the BBC Radio Theatre. They are a typically catholic mixture, juxtaposing established composers with newcomers, chamber works with ensemble pieces.

To come there will be an evening of Barraqué, marking the 70th anniversary of his birth, as well as new works from the Netherlands and Germany. The Cambridge

New Music Players, conducted by Paul Hoskins, gave the opening concert, and firmly set the tone of heterogeneity for the series. Birtwistle's early clavier and piano Verses was the only familiar work in their programme. There were premieres from Jo Kondo and Jonathan Powell, as well as the first complete performance of Adrian Jack's Zig-Zag. No one, however ingenious, could have made useful stylistic connections between all the composers represented here, which was the point.

That could have been epitomised by the gulf between Jack's pungent melodic writing in his nicely balanced three-movement work, with

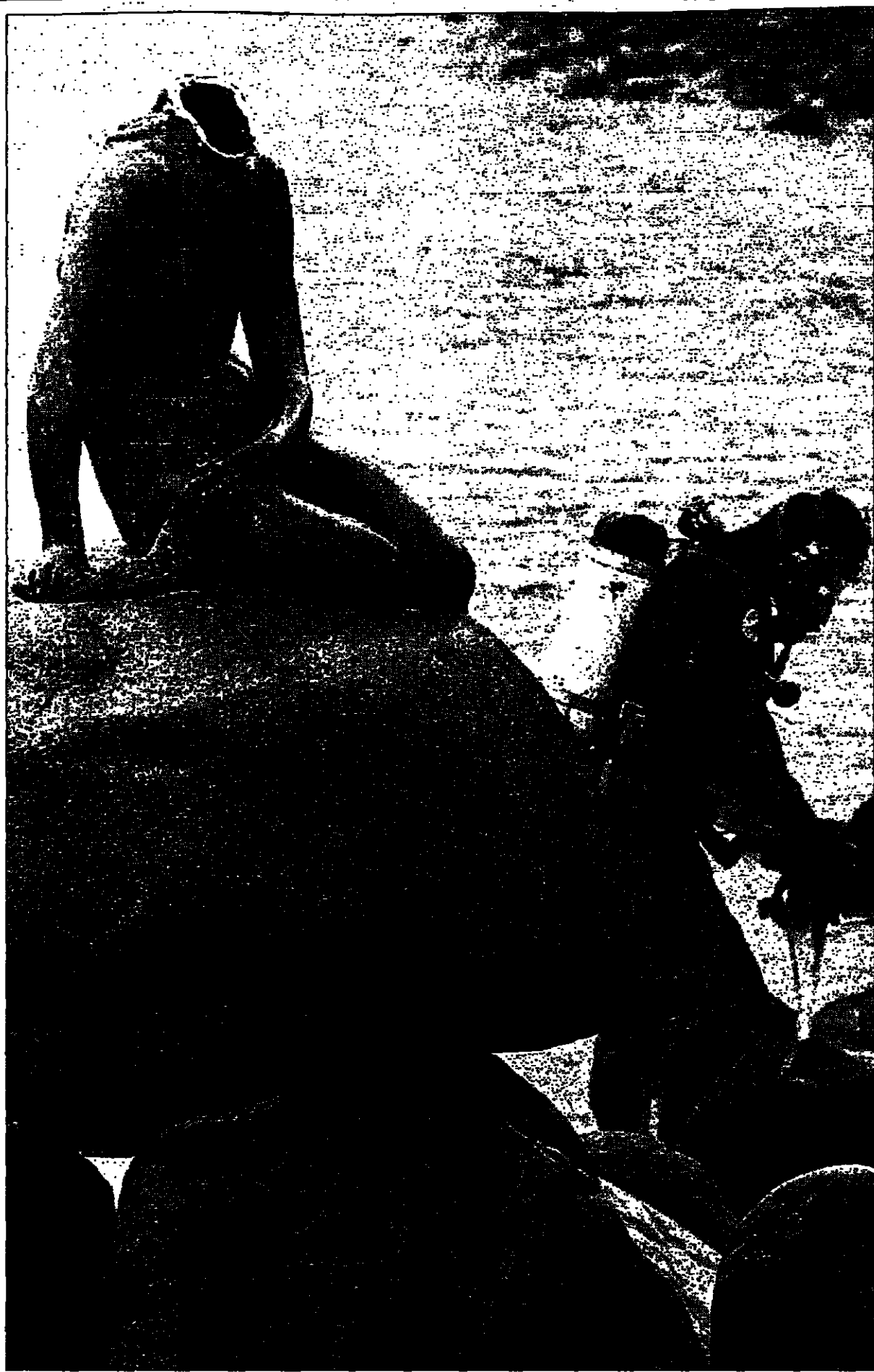
its echoes of Yiddish klezmer music and openly expressive gestures cross-cut in a Janacek-like way, and the delicate washes and carefully sculpted lines of Kondo's A Prospect of the Sky, which seemed like a pastel sketch in comparison with the rich colourings of Zig-Zag. Those, locked in their utterly different worlds, were the most substantial and rewarding pieces in the concert.

Neither Edward Dudley Hughes's rather congested piano trio Media Vita, which uses material from the Tudor composer John Sheppard, nor Powell's Proerta, a clarinet quintet based on a poem by Mayakovsky, really did anything more than conjure up

some passingly striking sonorities without ever finding for them a convincing framework.

But James Dillon's Redemption, a trio for clarinet, violin and piano that chases its gestures with great care and placed them precisely, was a real surprise. The welter of notes that Dillon would have produced for such a combination only a few years ago was nowhere to be heard. Instead there was music of clear, clean immediacy and real poetic force.

The programme will be broadcast on Radio 3 on Friday evening. Further concerts will take place in the Radio Theatre on January 11, 18 and 25.



Move to import blood agents from US

James Melkie

BITRAIN is considering importing blood clotting agents from the United States as concern mounts over the safety of home-grown blood donations and blood products.

Government officials, already assessing the possible risks of contracting Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, the human form of BSE, through transfusions and blood-related products, are in talks with the American Red Cross over supplies of Factor VIII, a treatment for haemophiliacs derived from blood plasma.

The officials say the Americans approached them, and believe the organisation wants to sell Factor VIII on the general market, for which it would need a British licence. But they insist they still have faith in the safety of British blood, despite requests from heads of haemophilia centres for foreign alternatives.

Ministers would have to confirm any deal, but Richard Walker, chief executive of BPL, the blood products company owned by the Department of Health, and Amy Graham, manager of international marketing and sales for the US Red Cross, have already had talks. She will travel to Britain for further discussions this month.

In the past, some American imports carried the HIV virus, but some haemophilia directors now think they are a better bet than British products.

BPL said yesterday: "We have no shortage of Factor VIII. We don't think it needs replacing. That product has a very good safety record."

Some of the 23 people who have so far been victims of new variant CJD (nvCJD), the official name for the BSE-linked condition, have been blood donors. Two batches of British-made blood products, some of which went to Ireland, have already been recalled, although to date there is no known instance of nvCJD cases among haemophilia sufferers.

The haemophilia directors prefer more expensive synthetic products, but availability varies.

Paul Giangrande, head of the largest centre at the Churchill hospital, Oxford, said he would support any move by BPL to import plasma products. "What is going to happen if another person goes down with new variant CJD who appears to have been a donor. We are going to be in trouble."

Scientists are also considering a strategy to reduce the number of white blood cells in the blood, most likely to carry the BSE agent, if it is transmissible through blood — as a precaution, although this could prove expensive.

Copenhagen's Little Mermaid loses her head to vandals

POLICE divers were hunting yesterday for the head of the Little Mermaid statue, left, based on a fairy-tale by the Danish author Hans Christian Andersen, is the city's best-known landmark and is visited by hundreds of thousands of tourists every year.

Since its erection in 1913, it has been drenched with paint several times and also had its head removed, in 1964. — Reuters

hope of finding the head. The Little Mermaid statue, left, based on a fairy-tale by the Danish author Hans Christian Andersen, is the city's best-known landmark and is visited by hundreds of thousands of tourists every year.

Since its erection in 1913, it has been drenched with paint several times and also had its head removed, in 1964. — Reuters

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Councils condemn proposals Blunkett says offer hope to deprived areas as businesses seek contracts to run education 'action zones'

Labour revolt on private schools plan

John Carvel
Education Editor

TONY BLAIR was last night facing a mutiny of Labour council chiefs after the Government announced plans to let private businesses take over the management of state education in deprived areas.

Senior officials disclosed that dozens of private firms were queuing for contracts in the first "education action zones", where schools will be allowed to tear up the normal rules governing the curriculum and teachers' pay.

Local authority leaders who thought they were going to have control of the zones, which were included in the education bill published last month, were furious when the fine print of the proposals

emerged at the North of England education conference in Bradford yesterday.

"This could be the beginning of the privatisation of the education system. It could lead to the break-up of education authorities. It could lead to the destruction of local democracy," said Graham Lane, Labour education chairman of the Local Government Association.

The row threatens to damage Labour unity in the run-up to council elections in May, which will be the first test in the polling booths of the Government's popularity.

The association sent a letter to Mr Blair accusing the Government of reneging on a code of conduct signed last month by John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, promising full consultation on policies affecting local government.

Timetable out, innovation in

EDUCATION action zones — were described by government officials yesterday as "the centrepiece of our modernisation agenda".

A first tranche of 25 zones will be set up in inner cities and deprived rural areas to experiment with new techniques of teaching, possibly involving the scrapping of the traditional timetable.

Schools in the zone will be allowed to dispense with

the national curriculum and to focus on the rudiments of literacy and numeracy. They will also be able to ignore national agreements on teachers' pay and conditions to extend the working week into early mornings, evenings or weekends.

Typically a zone will have two or three secondary schools and a cluster of about 16 feeder primaries.

The initiative was overseen by a partnership, usually in-

volving the local education authority, training and enterprise councils, businesses, community organisations, parents and schools. The partnership will have powers to contract management to private companies, but schools will remain subject to Ofsted inspection.

Ministers want a variety of innovative schemes, including some linked to parallel plans for employment and health zones.

The first five zones would begin operation in September and another 20 in September 1999.

David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, said: "Zones will offer hope to those in less favoured parts of the country, whether urban or rural, for greater educational opportunity. We are looking to innova-

businesses, schools and community organisations, but there would be powers to impose a zone on an area against the wishes of councillors.

The first five zones, due to come into operation in September, would include at least one where a contract to manage the schools was given to a private business. Prof Barber said. Interest had been expressed by "household names" — multinationals involved in manufacturing, commerce, insurance and information technology.

The initiative was modelled on schemes in the United States, where detergent group Procter and Gamble and management consultants Arthur Andersen ran schools.

most were likely to use the early contracts to demonstrate their expertise.

The plan would increase school budgets by about 5 per cent. One possibility was to appoint "superheads" on £100,000 or more a year to run consortia of schools.

Mr Lane said local authorities preparing to bid for zone status were horrified to discover that schools, parent groups and businesses would be allowed to bypass them and submit their own bids.

"This is not the action zone we envisaged. It is the beginning of an alternative education structure which is not accountable."

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said: "No teacher can feel secure when the Government is proposing a scheme to suspend national terms for pay and conditions."

Ex-Test cricketer found hanged

David Bairstow, troubled grit of Yorkshire cricket, dies at 46

John Duncan
and David Hopps

DAVID BAIRSTOW, the former England wicketkeeper whose stout figure and beaming ruddy face seemed to typify Yorkshire cricketing grit, was yesterday found hanged at his home, leaving his county and the cricketing community shocked and bewildered.

Bairstow's body was discovered yesterday morning at his home in Marton-cum-Grafton, North Yorkshire, by his wife, Janet, and two children Jonathan, aged 8, and Rebecca, aged 7.

Bairstow, aged 46, who had suffered a series of recent personal setbacks, died on the anniversary of the death of his father, Leslie.

His second wife, Janet, was diagnosed in June as suffering from breast cancer, and has completed a course of chemotherapy.

Troubles had begun to mount after he retired, unwillingly, from the first-class game in 1991. He was increas-

ingly burdened by ill-health and a succession of failed business ventures.

After a short-lived existence as a sales rep for a computer manufacturer, Bairstow also entered the corporate hospitality business with limited success, talking of plans to entertain clients at next summer's Headingley Test between England and South Africa. He also dabbled occasionally in BBC radio cricket commentary for Radio 5 Live as an expert summariser, although he never graduated to Test Match Special.

For all his schemes, success in the business world did not come as easily as on the field, where he won four England caps, added to a sprinkling of one-day internationals.

His family life had also been a source of difficulties. Andrew, aged 22, a son from his first marriage, who was at the family home yesterday, played a few games for Derbyshire, but failed to make the grade as a first-class wicketkeeper, much to his father's disappointment.

His stepdaughter, Claire,

was jailed for two-and-a-half years in 1996 after being found guilty of smuggling £35,000 worth of cannabis resin, hidden in door panels, into England.

Bairstow was due to appear before Wetherby magistrates on January 15 on a drink-driving charge.

He was badly injured in a car crash three months ago, suffering serious damage to his right arm, which necessitated an operation to insert a metal plate.

"He's been very ill," said his father-in-law yesterday. "We knew it was quite serious, but he was obviously more poorly than we actually realised."

Bairstow's death was met with disbelief by those who knew him. "He was always positive, jovial, liked a story, liked his golf, always looking for work — he was not a shirker in any way," said Fred Trueman, the former Yorkshire fast bowler. "It is beyond belief. I am still shocked. What has gone wrong I do not know. I just do not believe it."

Bairstow had robust views about Yorkshire cricket and little patience for the club's general committee. He often spoke of standing for election, "to sort things out," but never did.

He was last seen at Headingley handing out brochures advocating that Yorkshire should remain at the ground and abandon plans to move to a new stadium on the outskirts of Wakefield.

One regular at the Swan Inn, Aldborough, a few miles from his home, where Bairstow regularly held court, said: "He always liked to be the centre of attention. Everything came so easily for him in his cricket and he just expected business to go the same way."



The family's Yorkshire home where Bairstow was found



David Bairstow with his two children, Jonathan, now aged 8, and Rebecca, aged 7

'Lady in Lake' charges dropped

continued from page 1

church, who has supported Mr Park and attended court with him, said he was very pleased with the decision.

"I'm just thrilled for them," he said, "after their very difficult weeks and months." He said he looked forward to seeing the Parks back in the area very soon. Mr Park's bail conditions have meant that he has had to stay at an address in Greater Manchester.

Mr Park had been charged with murdering his wife on July 17 1976. Her trussed and weighted body, wearing a babydoll nightdress, was found by amateur divers at a depth of 70 feet at the bottom of the water. She was identified by her dental records.

Carol Park, aged 31, a primary school teacher, had been reported missing after her husband and their three children returned from a day out in Blackpool. She had not come with them, saying she was unwell. The marriage was dissolved three years later and Mr Park married his second wife, Katherine. After that marriage ended, he married his present wife, also a schoolteacher, in 1983.

After his arrest, Mr Park's boat, the Mrs J, which he kept on Coniston Water, was searched and he was remanded in custody. His first appearance at the magistrates' court in Barrow-in-Furness was greeted by a jeering crowd of 200 people.

He was due to face committal proceedings at the same court next week when the news that the charge had been dropped came through.



Jenny, Gordon Park's third wife, who is also a teacher

Most troubled of English sports 'tends to fuel depressives'

THERE have been 60 confirmed suicides among first-class cricketers since records began, making cricket the most troubled of English sports, writes John Duncan, Sports Correspondent.

Though sportspeople of all hues have committed suicide in the past — the boxer Randolph Turpin, the footballer Hughie Gallacher and Alan

Davies, and horse-racing's Fred Archer among them — no sport has such a high casualty rate.

The reason, says David Frith, who in 1991 published a study of cricket suicides, is the all-consuming nature of the game. "It sweeps you up and sweeps you along and takes you over," he said. "When it's gone there is a

huge hole. But you can never tell which ones are likely to do it. I was with Jim Burke, who shot himself in 1978, the week before he died and no one could have known."

Ex-players often face problems adjusting to life without the game. "He's been in a team all his life," said Mr Frith, "in a dressing room surrounded by people and

suddenly it's all over and he's at home on his own."

Bairstow is among 20 Test cricketers who have killed themselves. Another was Harold Gimblett, whose clinical depression was attributed to the tensions of the game. His biographer, David Foot, believes cricket tends to fuel depressives.

"Cricket, like no other game,

is played in the mind," Mr Foot said. "You spend so much time moping around and getting depressed about a whole variety of things. That's why cricket has such a phenomenal number of suicides."

Christmas, too, is a dangerous time for potential suicides. The last first-class cricketer to commit suicide, Danny Kelleher, killed himself in December 1995 at the age of 29, four years after

being released by Kent, for whom he had played for five seasons.

The man who coached Kelleher, Surrey's Graeme Clinton, was scathing at the time about the way clubs treat ex-players. "Most counties don't care about their old cricketers," he said. "They don't even care about you when you're playing for them."

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Dewar to run for top Scottish job

Cook drops out of fight to lead Edinburgh parliament

Lawrence Donaghy, Ewen MacAskill and Ian Black

THE Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar, will announce within the next few days that he is prepared to run for First Minister in the Scottish parliament after the Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, yesterday officially dropped out.

Mr Dewar, the architect of the Government's successful Yes campaign in last year's referendum, is to declare his intention to run as a candidate in the elections to the Edinburgh parliament in May 1999, ending what he described earlier this week as "damaging speculation".

With Labour a clear favourite to win the largest number of seats in the 129-seat parliament when it gets up and running in the year 2000, Mr Dewar would be the party's candidate to become the de facto "Scottish prime minister". His decision is certain to have the backing of Tony



Donald Dewar: ending 'damaging speculation'

Blair and will end weeks of speculation that Mr Cook felt marginalised in the Foreign Office job and would seek a power base in the Scottish parliament.

Mr Cook, MP for the Livingston constituency near Edinburgh, told the Commons foreign affairs committee yesterday that he had no intention of leaving for the foreseeable future.

"It will be a fundamental human right of the committee to see me for many years to come," he said. After the meeting, Mr Cook said of his Foreign Office job: "There are long-

term projects and I intend to see them through."

In recent weeks, Mr Cook had pointedly refused to deny speculation that he was considering running for the new parliament. An opponent of devolution in the failed 1979 referendum, he has since been converted to the cause of a Scottish parliament and campaigned in favour of it.

His decision will save Mr Blair from the prospect of a damaging fight for the post between two of his most senior Cabinet ministers.

However, senior Labour sources in Scotland and Westminster said last night that Mr Dewar always had the backing of Downing Street and the majority of party activists north of the border.

One source said: "The reality was that if Donald wanted to go for First Minister he would have won the day over Robin. Both are popular in party but after all the work that Donald has done on the white paper and the referendum, he was the obvious candidate to lead Labour into the new parliament."

It is believed that Mr Dewar, who will be 63 when the parliament opens, was initially reluctant to run. He will pilot the Scotland Bill through the next session of Parliament and will remain in the Cabinet as Scottish Sec-

retary at least until the elections in 1999.

At the committee, Mr Cook insisted Britain's new emphasis on human rights could make a difference, saying that he had lectured other countries on how to behave.

Under fire from Conservative members of the committee, Mr Cook boasted that Labour had successfully relaunched Britain's relations with Europe and was committed to a leadership role.

But against a background of criticism of his "ethical" foreign policy, he told David Williams (C): "I would robustly rebut the suggestion that I have at any stage lectured people."

And he insisted that his most pressing encounter in Indonesia, had been based on "mutual respect".

"I am not asking for countries to behave like Britain. We are asking them to behave according to the universal declaration on human rights, which they have signed."

There had been no "pulling of punches" over China, which has respected the terms for the hand-over of Hong Kong. But he added: "Representation may be more effective if made privately rather than through the megaphone of the press."

Bare facts make heavy reading

Rory Carroll

EVERYTHING you ever knew you wanted to know became available yesterday when the 500-page official handbook to Britain was published.

Thousands of facts detailing the minutiae of daily life are a fingertip away, courtesy of an army of dedicated worker ants at the National Office of Statistics. Embassies, schools, businesses and pub quiz compilers can share the same insights, such as 1996 biscuit exports being valued at £287 million.

Or that Blackpool Pleasure Beach, long regarded as a contradiction in terms, was the most popular free tourist attraction, drawing 7.5 million visitors in 1996.

That much maligned creature, The Average Person, watched more than 25 hours television a week and listened to the radio for 10 hours. Which may explain why cats, who do not fit into the handbook's neat categories, outnumber Britain's 6.6 million dogs by more than half a million.

We are not told whether this is related to the 7 per cent rise in fish consumption to 470,000 tonnes, but the 8.48 billion eggs consumed were apparently done so exclusively by humans, who also knocked back £28.015 million worth of booze. Who drank it remains disputed. Possibly men, whose life expectancy ended abruptly at 74. Or their widows, who had another six years to drink away their loneliness before expiring.

Three quarters of those who survived 1996 had the pleasure of a microwave, 82 per cent had a video and 91 per cent a washing machine. That did not stop them getting out. British airlines carried 77 million passengers and more than 772 million journeys were made on London Underground trains. How many reached their destination is not stated.

Good news for builders and estate agents. In the next 20 years some 4 million houses and flats may have to be built in England to accommodate people in need of decent housing.

Bad news for everyone else. Between 1990 and 2100 it is estimated that global average temperatures could increase by 2C — a greater average rate of warming than any seen in

the past 10,000 years. Other things you were not sure you wanted to know:

□ Each day in England and Wales, 700,000 people visit their family doctor, 130,000 attend the dentist and 2,000 babies are born.

□ More than 100 British sportsmen and women hold world championship titles.

□ More than 480 million prescriptions worth almost £4,000 million were dispensed in England and Wales last year.

□ In 1995/96, local authorities in England and Wales collected 26 million tonnes of waste — but only 6.5 per cent was recycled.

□ The richest 10 per cent of the population have 48 per cent of the wealth.

□ Visitors to Britain have more than doubled in 20 years to 25.3 million.

New row on Welsh devolution vote

Michael White
Political Editor

THE Welsh Secretary, Ron Davies, moved last night to quash fresh controversy over voting in last year's devolution referendum.

As the Conservative constitutional spokesman, Michael Antram, joined calls for full disclosure of details surrounding the counting of votes in Mr Davies's own Caerphilly constituency on the night of September 18, the Welsh Secretary dismissed complaints as "technical matters".

The row was triggered by

publication in the Scotsman newspaper of documents which have been circulating in South Wales since October. They list 11 points of procedural concern by observers of the count made by Labour activists in the Caerphilly constituency area — which delivered 6,000 votes for the pro-devolution camp which won by just 6,700 votes overall, or 0.6 per cent, across Wales.

Lengthy correspondence was quoted by the Scotsman, notably from Derek Lamb, the Caerphilly constituency secretary.

The most sensitive of Mr Lamb's candid comments was that any formal complaints would be tricky. "Ultimately

the buck stops at the Welsh Office, and we realise that politically we have to be extremely careful because of Ron's position." That refers to Mr Davies's turbulent past as an anti-devolutionist who is still seen in Downing Street as an Old Labour bruiser. Citing a subsequent investigation by the local returning officer, Mr Davies yesterday told Radio 4's World at One that he had "made it absolutely clear that each and every question had been fully investigated and properly responded to... There was no question of either improprieties or any question that the vote itself... was flawed". Most Welsh Labour MPs

and party officials support his assessment. But the Yes camp won such a tiny majority that No campaigners in all parties are hardly likely to ignore an embarrassing leak from inside Mr Davies's own backbench — even though the disputed procedures seem largely to concern the way votes were counted and observer access to them.

Mr Antram yesterday said that the leaks raised questions about "the veracity of the Secretary of State's spokes of a distinct smell of cover-up".

"It is vital that this whole matter is publicly cleared as soon as possible by full disclosure," he said.



Rescue workers search for the missing man on the cliff edge near St Agnes Head, Cornwall

PHOTOGRAPH: NICK ROBINSON

Cliff top driving lesson tragedy

Man feared dead after woman escapes 250ft plunge into sea

Ruaridh Nicol
and Stuart Miller

AMAN is feared dead after the car in which he was giving his girlfriend a driving lesson plunged 250ft off a cliff in north Cornwall.

Andrew Dunkin, in his twenties, of St Agnes, Cornwall, is believed to have gone over the edge with the car at the Beacon, a coastal beauty spot near St Agnes Head. The woman, who has not been

named, managed to scramble to safety out of the Ford Fiesta's driving seat. She called the coastguard and helped in the search by the police and the navy until it was called off as darkness fell.

"This was a tragic accident," said Colin Sturman of Falmouth Coastguard, which is co-ordinating the search. "We will resume searching at first light tomorrow."

A spokesman for Devon and Cornwall police said they were talking to the woman to try to establish how the

tragedy happened. Ambulance crews treated her at the scene for a shoulder injury and shock, but she was not admitted to hospital. Instead, she stayed at the cliff, where the car had fallen into 30ft of water.

Divers were flown in by two Sea King rescue helicopters from the Royal Naval Air Station at Culdrose, but they were unable to work because the sea was too rough near the foot of the cliffs. The St Ives lifeboat and the St Agnes inshore lifeboat arrived with two coastguard cliff rescue teams.

All that could be recovered from the foot of the cliff was clothing and a bag. Wreckage

of the car was washing around in the surf.

"Rescuers have been finding lots of wreckage from the car, but it is becoming clear the man must have left the vehicle," a spokesman for the coastguard said.

Friends and neighbours in St Agnes, where the couple live, were appalled.

A neighbour said that Mr Dunkin stood little chance with such a fall. "It's all so desperately sad," she said. "I don't know what they were doing up there at The Beacon. They were probably just having fun and looking at the waves because it is such a brilliant vantage point but it's a notorious spot."

Move to import blood from US

James Meikle

BITAIN is considering importing blood clotting agents from the United States as concerns mount over the safety of home-grown blood donations and blood products.

Government officials, already assessing the possible risks of contracting human BSE through transfusions and blood-related products, are in talks with the American Red Cross over supplies of Factor VIII, a treatment for haemophilia derived from blood plasma.

The officials say the Americans approached them, and believe the organisation wants to sell Factor VIII on the general market, for which it would need a British licence.

Ministers would have to confirm any deal, but Richard Walker, chief executive of BFL, the blood products company owned by the Department of Health, and Amy Graham, manager of international marketing and sales for the US Red Cross, have already had talks. She will travel to Britain for further discussions this month.

In the past, some American imports carried the HIV virus, but some haemophilia directors now think they are a

better bet than British products. BFL said yesterday: "We have no shortage of Factor VIII. We don't think it needs replacing. That product has a very good safety record."

Some of the 22 people who have so far been victims of new variant CJD (nvCJD), the official name for the BSE-linked condition, have been blood donors. Two batches of British-made blood products, some of which went to Ireland, have already been recalled, although to date there is no known instance of nvCJD cases among haemophilia sufferers.

The haemophilia directors prefer more expensive synthetic products, but availability varies. Paul Giangrande, head of the biggest centre at the Churchill hospital, Oxford, said he would support any move by BFL to import plasma products.

"What is going to happen if another person goes down with new variant CJD who appears to have been a donor? We are going to be in trouble. Scientists are also considering a strategy to reduce the number of white blood cells — thought most likely to carry the BSE agent, if it is transmissible through blood — as a precaution, although this could prove expensive."

Car thief takes boys for a ride

David Ward

TWO young brothers were recovering at home yesterday after being taken for a ride by a thief who stole their father's car.

The man drove the boys at high speed at night through back streets in Bury, Greater Manchester.

The abduction followed an incident at the weekend in which children aged two and three were driven away by another thief who stole a car in Audenshaw, Greater Manchester. They were found more than a mile away.

Ben Berry, aged 14, and his brother Jacob, 10, were dosing in the white Mazda saloon when their father, John, stopped at a shop, leaving the key in the ignition.

"When I came out, the car had gone and there was no sign of the kids," said Mr Berry. "A thousand thoughts went through my mind. Was someone playing a joke? I ran home and told my wife, Lynne, to phone the police."

Ben, who had been in the front passenger seat, said that when the man got into the driver's seat he did not realise it was not his father. "The car started off really fast and all I could see was the top of the houses," he said. "I didn't know where I was. He started

going down all these alleys. "We hit this bumpy road. I turned round and he didn't look like my dad at all. He stopped on this track and said 'Get out of the car, kid.'"

Ben, not realising that his father was still in the back seat, saw Jacob's head pop up.

"I leaned forward to get the back door open and my brother out but the car sped off. I chased it, but it stormed down a pitch black road and I didn't know where I was. "I ran back to the nearest house, where this guy was outside pumping his tyres up. He ran inside and phoned the police to tell them my brother was still in the car. We got into this man's car and started to head after them."

Mr Berry said the thief continued at high speed down the track to a point where the road was blocked by another car. "The thief got out, told the woman driver he was a police officer chasing thieves and told her to take Jacob back to the main road."

Jacob got into the woman's car, and as they drove up the track he was spotted by Ben coming the other way.

Mr Berry meanwhile, searched local streets in his wife's car.

Keeper dropped for name calling

John Duncan
Sports Correspondent

AFORMER Cameroun World Cup goalkeeper has been sacked from Molesey Football Club for shouting his name too loudly.

Andre Boe, Cameroun's third string keeper during the 1990 World Cup in Italy, has found his services unwanted in the Ryman League after referees complained that his charging from goal shouting his name constituted ungentlemanly conduct.

"He kept shouting 'Boo' when the ball was to be passed to him near the goal mouth," said Ben O'Connor, secretary of Molesey FC in Surrey. "He says he



Andre Boe: sacked for his 'tactics'

PHOTOGRAPH: BEN RADFORD

was only shouting his name, but it sounds like 'Boo' to everyone else. We tried to get him to shout 'keeper', but he wouldn't. The referee had to tell him

off for unsporting behaviour. It really got to them."

Boe's stay at Molesey has been somewhat troubled since he arrived at the start of the season on a free

transfer from Greenock Morton in Scotland. "When we played Wembley FC at their small ground and went to Wembley Stadium, where he'd been reserve for his country once," said O'Connor. "He phoned and we said 'Go to Sudbury station'. He turned up at Sudbury."

"On a 7.45pm kick off he turned up at 8.10. We had put one of the outfield players in goal and were leading 1-0. Andre came on and within five minutes we were 2-1 down. But he is a great loss to the club."

Boe's command of English occasionally proved an advantage, however. He was imperturbable when barracked by opposing fans, said his team mates. "In an FA Trophy match they were swearing at him and he said what lovely gentlemen they were," said O'Connor.

Boe, aged 34, a computer engineer, is now between clubs. "It is very unfair," he said last night. "I would not want to intimidate other players. I kept shouting Boe, leaving out the part of my name after the apostrophe. They thought, because of my accent, that I was saying Boo. But I don't see why I can't shout my name. Everyone else does."

Demand for compensation from angry former PoWs casts shadow over Prime Minister's visit to Tokyo but Whitehall dampens hopes

Blair told to seek Japanese apology

Ewen MacAskill, Chief Political Correspondent

FORMER prisoners of war are urging Tony Blair to put pressure on the Japanese government to apologise for ill-treatment during the second world war and pay compensation.

The veterans hope that Mr Blair, who leaves tomorrow for a four-day visit to Tokyo, will be able to secure a package because the Japanese government will be anxious to avoid embarrassing scenes

when the Emperor and Empress visit Britain in May. But Whitehall sources last night expressed expectations, saying Mr Blair will raise the issue but the Japanese government had insisted it would not pay compensation.

The issue will cast a shadow over Mr Blair's visit, during which he intends to concentrate on inward investment and Japanese-EU relations.

Arthur Titherington, chairman of the Japanese Labour Camp Survivors' Association, which claims 9,000 members,

said yesterday that other countries, such as Germany, Austria, and even the US, had paid compensation to victims, but Japan alone had refused either to apologise or pay proper compensation.

"We are not doing this from a sense of revenge or anything like that," said Mr Titherington, who wants \$14,000 for either the former PoWs or their widows.

"It is for justice. I worked as a slave in copper mines. Someone made money out of that and I want compensation."

After three years of legal

wrangling in the Tokyo courts, the issue is due to come to a head on February 19 when the Japanese government's lawyers give their response to the claim. Mr Titherington, who will be in court, said: "The money is not important. We want a sum of money plus a meaningful apology. The Japanese prime minister has apologised but that was a personal thing from him, not from the government. The Japanese do not want to lose face."

The Japanese government had been procrastinating, during which time more of

his members had died. "Maybe that is part of their grand plan."

When Emperor Hirohito visited Britain in 1971, he met with silence from the crowds lining the streets of London. Both the Japanese and British governments hope there will some warmth when his son and successor, Emperor Akihito, makes his first state visit in May.

Mr Titherington said that he had asked for a meeting with Mr Blair to brief him about the British case but that had not been granted. He had instead last month met

the Foreign Office minister, Derek Fatchett, who had told him that trying to get agreement from the Japanese government was "like banging your head against a brick wall".

The veteran was captured at the fall of Singapore in 1942 and held by the Japanese in Taiwan for three years. Germany and Austria had paid out billions of marks to the victims of the Holocaust, he said, and the US had given \$20,000 in 1982 to each Japanese moved from the west coast during the war.

The veterans' legal case

was boosted last spring when Frits Kalsbever, professor of international law at Leiden university in Holland, and the leading authority on the treatment of PoWs, told the Tokyo court that the claims for compensation were valid because, under the 1907 Hague Convention, individuals were able to make claims for abuse of human rights.

Mr Titherington yesterday received an initial response from the Japanese government's lawyers but was having to have it translated.

Mr Fatchett met Japanese ministers and officials on a

visit to Japan in November but was told the country had no case to answer. The Japanese government has long insisted that the San Francisco Treaty of 1951 had provided for compensation but the veterans argue that this was a treaty between governments and did not properly take individuals into account.

The Japanese ambassador, Sadayuki Hayashi, laid a wreath at the ruins of Coventry Cathedral in November as a gesture, and a former Japanese prime minister apologised in 1985 during the VJ Day ceremonies.



The Valiant Soldier, whose bar (right) has been untouched since 1965

Residents enlist in fight for cash to keep undisturbed pub as lasting monument to nights of 1960s revelry

Emily Sheffield on a drive to inject life into the Valiant Soldier



Brian Cross, who wants the pub to remain undisturbed

MORE than thirty years ago Alice and Mike Roberts shouted last orders in the popular Valiant Soldier pub and ushered their regulars out the door for the very last time.

They cleared glasses, stoked the fire, took a final look around the Dartmoor pub they had been serving drinks in since 1938, locked the bar and slid the bolts across the door.

Mr Roberts was unwell and Whitbread brewers had said they could buy the freehold on condition they shut the pub and made it their home.

That was in 1965. It was not until September 1996 —

when widowed Mrs Roberts was forced to sell the pub to pay for her care in a home for the elderly — that an estate agent walked in and found the bar undisturbed since the night it closed.

Dominoes were laid out on the table, darts still in the board and the scores chalked up on the board.

A few dirty glasses were still stacked on the bar, discarded cigarette packets littered the ashtrays and even the till contained shillings and old pennies.

There was little dust to show the passing of the years — the only clue being the 1965 Whitbread calendar on the wall and an antiquated price list.

Social historians say the Valiant is an extraordinary time capsule capturing pub life in the 1960s and is believed to be unique.

Nothing has been touched since and now the town residents are battling to raise \$200,000 to keep their little slice of history intact and turn it into a museum.

At least £100,000 is needed by the end of the year for urgent renovations. By 2000 a further £200,000 will have to be found for Teignbridge district council which bought the Valiant last year for £70,000. However, it has warned it will sell it in two years unless the town can buy it.

Brian Cross, from the Buckfastleigh 2000 charity group, which is seeking to preserve the pub, said yesterday: "Although we will never be able to serve ale in there again, the pub is full of gems we don't want to let go of. Teignbridge is a quiet little town and tourists could generate much needed trade."

"We are also hoping to build up an archive of oral history from those who used to drink in it."

Charles Trade, aged 70, said he had his first pint of beer in the Valiant when he was 18 in June 1946.

"It was a very popular pub, usually full and the Robertses always remem-

bered your name," he said. "During the last war lots of American soldiers based nearby and the Women's Land Army also drank in there. In those days the police would come at 10pm and order you to get out whether you had finished your pint or not," he added.

First opened in 1831, it was not considered one of the most up-market of the town's 20 pubs.

Cash is being raised by charging visitors to the pub and the fund raising charity group has applied for a lottery grant. It is also appealing to other charities.

Until then the future of the pub that time forgot is uncertain.

Hot can of tea makes debut in Bolton, wooing and winning over lollipop persons and market traders

David Ward

THE people have been gasping for this on gale-blasted streets of a northern town. The whole world would have clamoured for it had it known it wanted it.

One of the great products of a civilization marching optimistically into the third millennium, the ready-to-drink can of tea, was launched yesterday at the Candy and Cards shop in Bolton, Greater Manchester.

Pay your 55p to Varsha Hazal, the proprietor, rip off the ring pull and quaff 190ml of PG Tips brewed in Manchester, canned in Belgium and heated for three hours in Bolton to between 55 and 57C.

Brooke Bond, which has produced both tea granules and the pyramidal tea bag, is so confident about the future of its 25 million innovative can that it has offered free can vouchers to Bolton's 130 lollipop persons.

The 130 can have white tea, with or without sugar, or opt for a can of white Red Moun-



Technology marches on: Brooke Bond's tinued tea

tain coffee or hot chocolate. Yesterday Brooke Bond's marketing people awaited verdicts from a small group of Bolton lollipopers. John Castle said the brew tasted better than his own. "I like my tea hot, strong and sugary and this is great. It's not too tiny to taste, and it's lovely and hot in your hand."

Norma Edmundson said: "It tastes great, especially when it's cold and rainy like today. I normally wait till I get home for a brew, but this is just the way I make it."

Arthur Dawson was the odd lollipop out: "I don't like it. It tastes too tiny. Tea should be brewed in a pot and made to your own taste. The hot chocolate's not bad though."

In the interests of wider research, cans were taken to the chilled-to-the-marrow traders on Bolton's market.

Flower seller Gordon Ball said the stuff in the can was better than the brew he pours from a flask and fishmonger Pauline Fletcher tried the coffee and said her stall's kettle had just been made redundant. "I'm really surprised but it's actually lovely."

Jill Winter, Brooke Bond's marketing controller, said the biggest challenge was getting the tea right. "We spent three years trying to get that fresh brewed taste. We launched in Bolton because it's typical of the British public."

The company did not reveal the reaction of its chimps.

Scientists forecast scorching summers for Britain by middle of the next century

The Bradford Science Editor

BY 2050, one British summer in three could be a scorcher, according to climate scientists.

At present, one summer in about 30 hits the highs of up to 36C, and the sunshine levels experienced during 1985 and 1976, two of the most glorious summers of the century. But according to the latest computer models, overall temperatures are likely to rise by between 1.2C and 1.6C.

as greenhouse gases build up in the atmosphere. The South and East will get warmer and drier: rainy days could drop 4 per cent, and summer rainfall 6 per cent, according to the Met Office's Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research.

Scotland could expect wetter weather in both winter and summer, but the number of very hot days — above 26C — will increase from an average of 12 to 20 a year, and the number of days with frost could go down from 42 to 18.

There is no certainty in climate forecasting. Last year, for instance, a US scientist warned that a global warming could alter ocean currents such as the Gulf Stream — and leave the British Isles with Arctic temperatures. But for now the consensus is for a warmer Britain.

In a speech to farmers in Oxford yesterday Trevor Davies, director of the Climatic Research Unit at the University of East Anglia, said: "There has been a major improvement in computer model performance, and most climate scientists believe the projections presented here are reasonable indications of what might happen."

Should not, however, be surprised by the climate's ability to surprise us."

Last night, the Met Office confirmed that January 1997 was the driest for 200 years: only 15mm of rain fell the whole month. January 1998 was already dramatically different: at least 15mm of rain had fallen on the first day, and 60 per cent of the average January rain had arrived in the first five days.

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Since Kenya's colonial days, people have been systematically driven off their land to make way for wildlife. "They have always treated us as pests," says Koikai Oloitiptip.

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6 WORLD NEWS

World news in brief

UN appeals for more food for North Korea

THE United Nations' World Food Programme appealed for \$235 million in emergency aid yesterday to avert famine in North Korea, saying that food stocks in the country could run out by April. The WFP said it needed 657,972 tonnes of food to distribute to 7.5 million North Koreans, up sharply from the 4.7 million it helped last year. It is the biggest appeal in the organisation's history.

"We are calling on [the international community] to be more generous to prevent food shortages becoming a famine," its executive director, Catherine Bertini, told a news conference. Hunger and malnutrition have become widespread since floods devastated large areas of farmland in 1995 and 1996. The floods were followed last year by a severe drought. — Reuters

Strikes on Chechens urged

ONE OF Russia's most powerful generals called yesterday for air strikes against "bandit targets" in the separatist territory of Chechnya, confirming the fears of Chechens and Russian liberals that a hardline party of war still exists in the Kremlin. General Anatoly Kulikov, head of the interior ministry, said the recent guerrilla raid on a Russian tank base in Budanitsk, east of Chechnya, justified retaliation.

Commander of the army during the Chechen war, Gen Kulikov has never been reconciled to withdrawal in 1996. A Chechen minister, Movladi Udogov, said he was bent on undermining peace efforts. — James Meek, Moscow

Hague war crimes trial opens

THE trial of a suspected Bosnian Croat prison commander accused of offences against Muslim inmates opened yesterday at the Hague tribunal. Vlatko Kupreskic, aged 37, is accused of mistreating prisoners at the Kozarica detention camp in central Bosnia in 1993. He has pleaded not guilty.

Meanwhile the tribunal said Vlatko Kupreskic, a Bosnian Croat seized by Nato troops near Vitez last month, will appear before it next week charged with attacking and killing Muslim civilians in Bosnia in 1993. — Reuters, The Hague

Grammy nominees revealed

THE recording industry has announced the nominees for its annual Grammy awards, with newcomer Paula Cole's 'This Fire' heading the list. Other nominees included Shawn Colvin for 'Sunny Came Home', and Sheryl Crow for 'Everyday is a Winding Road'. Bob Dylan and Paul McCartney received nominations for 'Time Out of Mind' and 'Flaming Pie'. — Reuters, New York

Sounds like a victory

AN ANTI-WHALE group named the son of Norway's leading whaler "crewman of the year" for accidentally sinking his family's boat. The Oslo newspaper Verdens Gang reported yesterday. The 45ft Morild, owned by Steinar Bastesen, sank at its wharf in Brønnøysund, 430 miles north of Oslo, in November.

After a series of attacks on whaling boats, sabotage was suspected. But the police concluded that 20-year-old Stein Eirik forgot to close several valves. The Sea Shepherd group, which has claimed responsibility for several attacks on whaling boats, said by virtue of the accident the younger Bastesen had "made a strong contribution to protecting whales". — AP, Oslo

Iranian plane crashes safely

RESCUE teams found all 113 people on an Iranian airliner safe yesterday after the Fokker-100 made an emergency landing in the desert near the central city of Isfahan, Tehran radio said.

"Fortunately, because of the rains in the past few days and the type of earth in the area, the ground was soft and the plane was able to perform a good emergency landing," said Ali Shabchehagh, head of Iran's civil aviation authority. — Reuters, Tehran

Israel defends manoeuvres

A SENIOR Israeli navy officer yesterday dismissed as "political commentary" assertions that joint manoeuvres with Turkey and the US in the Mediterranean were directed against other countries in the region. Today's 12-hour search-and-rescue drill has prompted the anger of Arab states and Iran.

"It's completely clear that some of the commentary on this drill is political commentary," said Brigadier-General Yedidia Ya'ari, Israel's co-ordinator of the exercise. But Syria's official al-Thawra newspaper called the manoeuvres "an encouragement to Israel to continue its aggression against peace and Arab and Islamic states". — Reuters, Tel Aviv

Dog-bite epidemic in US

THE US is suffering an epidemic of dog-bite injuries, and more than half the victims are children, researchers in Pennsylvania said yesterday. One in six of the 4.5 million Americans bitten each year needed treatment, they said. — Reuters, Chicago

Suicide painful for neighbours

A SUICIDE attempt by a 31-year-old unemployed Dutchman failed but he succeeded in blowing up a row of houses, the Dutch media reported yesterday. He turned on gas taps in his home on Sunday night then struck a match, demolishing his house and damaging the structures of three others in the northern town of Bellen. The man suffered burns. — Reuters, Amsterdam

Invoking the escape clause



Mimi the cat leaves her owner's UFO-style vehicle at his farm near Bordeaux in France. Joel Tessier's electric-powered saucer can cruise at 12mph. PHOTOGRAPH: BOB EDME

'Pride of Russian music' dies

GEORGY SVIRIDOV, one of Russia's most prominent composers this century, has died of a heart attack aged 82. "Undoubtedly he was one of the greatest composers of the 20th century," Interfax news agency quoted the prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, as saying.

Sviridov was the disciple of Dmitry Shostakovich, who once called him his most talented pupil and his choral and symphonic works "the pride of Russian music". — Reuters, Moscow

Marriage made for CNN

JAMES RUBIN, a spokesman for the United States state department, admitted yesterday that reports that he is to marry Christiane Amanpour, CNN's star reporter, were true. When the cameras at a department briefing were turned off, he said: "My mother is thrilled." — AP, Washington

Election year in Germany

Fortress Europe deserted

In the first of three articles on key issues facing voters, Ian Traynor in Bonn reports on the battle to champion law and order and clamp down on immigration

TO ARRIVE at the little airport in Mönchengladbach in north-west Germany is to enter a country not named on any map. The signs ushering you through passport control to the baggage reclaim welcome you not to the Federal Republic of Germany, nor even to the European Union.

They offer you in two directions: the first lane seems to be leading to a strange place named Schengen, bereft of border guards and passport checks; the second takes you into "Non-Schengen", a place of queues, electronic identity checks, and computerised international databases.

Germany is the linchpin of Schengen, or Fortress Europe as it is otherwise known. But more than two years after the vast transnational entity was born, it is losing faith in the ambitious experiment to abolish border controls from Lisbon to Leipzig, from the Adriatic to the Arctic.

The reason for the loss of faith can be summed up in two words: elections and foreigners. On September 27, Germany goes to the polls in what many see as the most important election in perhaps a generation.

It will be a national plebiscite on 16 years of Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who is bidding fair to become Germany's longest-serving chancellor and the longest-ruling head of government in any Western democracy.

In addition, 1998 sees elections in four, perhaps five, of Germany's 16 states, including Lower Saxony and Bavaria.

LAW and order has surfaced as a key battleground. Manfred Kanther, the hardline interior minister from Mr Kohl's Christian Democrats, has declared 1998 "the year of security", unveiling a plan to combat crime, curb immigration, and demand similar action from Bonn's European partners.

Tomorrow, Bavaria's ruling Christian Social Union, part of Mr Kohl's coalition, will go further. With an eye on its state poll a fortnight before the national vote, the CSU will debate a policy paper on "internal security" demanding police powers to enforce checks on cars without grounds for suspicion, the

abolition of open penal institutions, use of the domestic intelligence service to combat organised crime, and the extension of crown-witness rules which at present can only be invoked for terrorism trials.

The Social Democrats, desperate to win after 16 years in opposition, are also climbing on to the "get tough" bandwagon. Gerhard Glogowski, the Social Democrat interior minister of Lower Saxony, called this week for German border controls to be reintroduced and Schengen shelved.

His boss, Gerhard Schröder, faces the most important election of his life on March 2. If he wins well in Lower Saxony, he will probably be allowed to challenge Mr Kohl for the first time in September and could be the next chancellor.

Neither the Christian Democrats nor the Social Democrats want to be accused of being soft on crime in an election year. And inevitably in Germany, the law and order lobbying spills over into anti-

foreigner and anti-immigrant campaigning. By virtue of its size, wealth, geography, and previously hospitable attitude to immigrants and refugees, Germany is the magnet for indigents clamouring to be let in to Schengen Europe.

But politically at least, the welcome mats have been pulled away. It is open season for encouraging xenophobia and scapegoating foreigners as social security spongers.

The manifesto demands of the CSU's youth wing include a paper bluntly accusing non-Germans of criminality and arguing that "many foreigners would rather sit in jail in Germany than in freedom at home".

Its blueprint for action includes deporting non-Germans convicted of crimes, using development aid to blackmail countries from which the immigrants come, and cutting from 16 to 10 the

age up to which immigrants' children may join their families in Germany. The arrival of boatloads of Kurdish refugees via Italy has coincided with the start of German electioneering. To listen to the politicians, every boat person is hellbent on evading the controls to get to Germany to enjoy the good life at the taxpayer's expense.

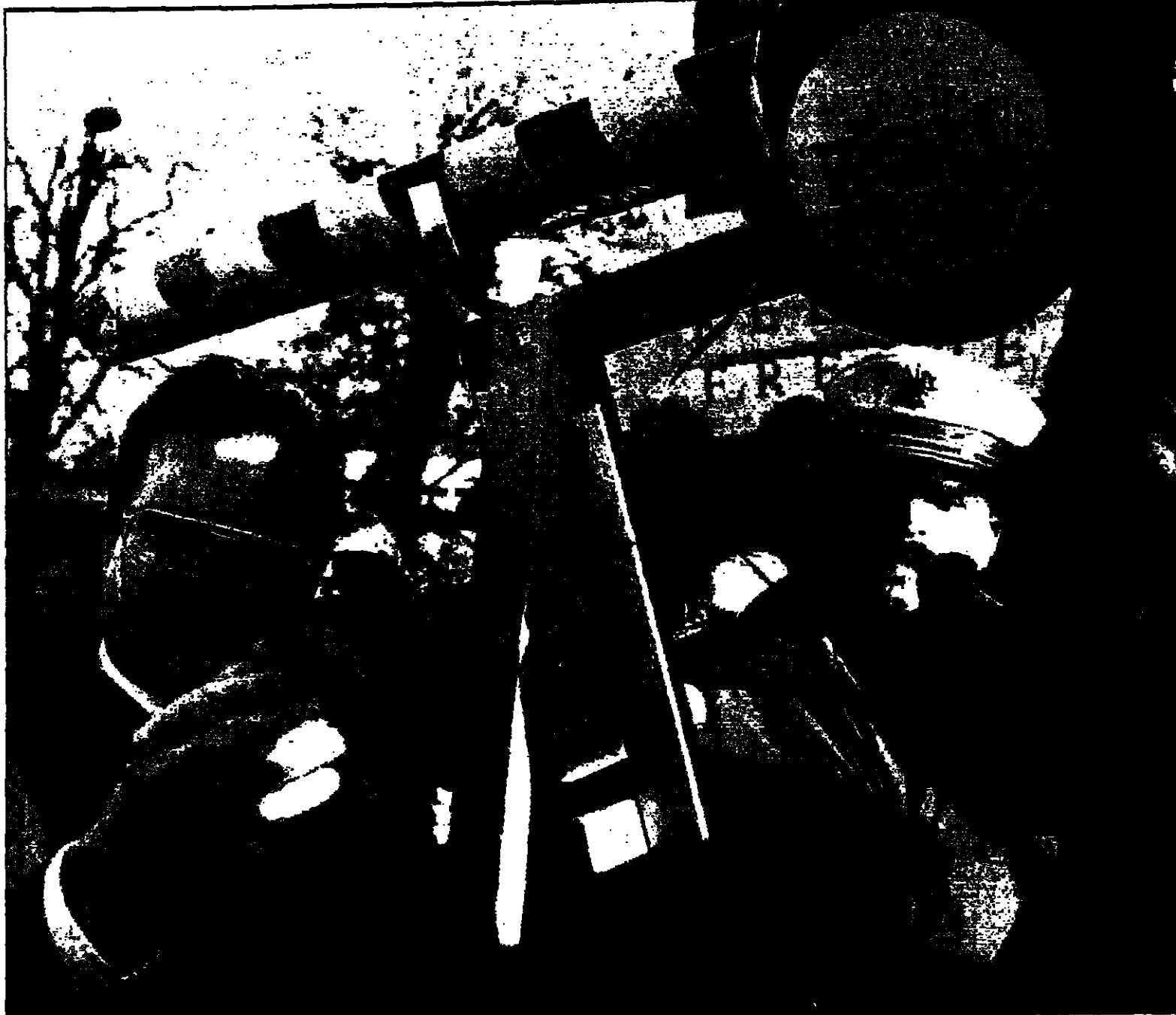
Yesterday senior CDU politicians urged the closure of Germany's borders. Mr Kanther has spent the week reading the riot act to the Italians because Rome said it would consider requests for political asylum. A Kurdish refugee about to be deported to Turkey walked into a garage near Mönchengladbach on Monday night, doused himself with petrol, set himself alight, and died.

About one third of the 350,000 Bosnian war refugees in Germany have been encouraged to go home in the last year and the push is on to get rid of as many as possible before September.

Schengen was a key element in Mr Kohl's drive for common EU asylum and immigration policies, but the enthusiasm has faded. At last summer's EU summit, he insisted on retaining his national veto on asylum matters. The strangely named airport signs may soon revert to something more familiar.

Next: A paralysed system and the pressure for change

Analysis, page 11; City notebook, page 12



Germany's foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, holds aloft a customs barrier in Stuttgart yesterday. It was set up by the youth wing of his Free Democratic Party to demonstrate support for the possibility of granting dual nationality to immigrants. PHOTOGRAPH: BERNI WESSEHO

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Some migrants try to sneak across Turkey's land border with Greece while others pay thousands of pounds for illegal passage in Turkish ships. Turkish officials say the migration is due to economic reasons alone and deny Italian assertion that Turkey's 10 million Kurds suffer political persecution.

Turkey has already launched an internal crackdown on would-be migrants, detaining hundreds. — Reuters

Turkey tightens borders to stem exodus

TURKEY promised yesterday to tighten its borders to stem a wave of migrants leaving in flimsy boats for western Europe.

A government spokesman, Sukru Sina Gurcel, said "physical measures" at border crossings would be increased and the visa system would be examined.

Turkey is under pressure from the European Union to

halt the flood of migrants, many of them Kurds from Turkey and Iraq, who have arrived in Italy recently. The EU's external relations commissioner, Hans van den Broek, asked Turkey to step up security on its borders to stop the "completely uncontrolled influx of immigrants".

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own professional holiday," said Oleg Frolov, a public holiday consultant. The public holiday philosophy involves reviving pre-revolutionary traditions, losing nothing from the Soviet era and adding some post-Soviet eclecticism.

Although the number of general days off is not that high, Russians build "bridges" linking days off to weekends. The most notorious Soviet "bridge" is still in place, between the two-day May Day holiday and Victory Day on May 9.

To make matters worse, new Russians have begun flirting with the Catholic-Protestant Christmas on December 25 and promoting the "Old New Year" — New Year under the old calendar — on January 13-14.

Mr Yeltsin has tinkered with the main communist holiday on November 7, but

not dared to cancel it. He has halved it to one day off and tried to change its name from Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution to Day of Accord and Reconciliation.

He has piled on additional holidays: Constitution Day, Independence Day, Russian Flag Day and Day of the Union of Peoples, which was established to mark the so far meaningless "union" of Russia and Belarus.

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Response to massacres

Cook steers plan to send EU mission to Algiers

Ian Black
Diplomatic Editor

BITAIN is leading a European Union attempt to intervene in Algeria after reports that hundreds of civilians were killed last weekend in an upsurge of violence at the start of Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, told MPs yesterday of his "deep concern" at the deteriorating situation and said discussions were taking place under the British presidency about sending a high-level EU mission to Algiers.

According to one Algerian newspaper, several hundred people were burnt alive and 117 had their throats cut in two attacks in western Algeria.

Showing belated concern after an estimated 85,000-80,000 deaths since 1992, diplomats said Britain had taken up a German proposal that the EU troika — the past, current and future holders of the six-month presidency — should visit Algiers.

Other ideas include a visit by a United Nations envoy to establish responsibility for the massacres, but the Algerian government insists that such an extraordinary step can only be discussed at routine talks in mid-March.

Ahmed Binyamina, Algeria's ambassador to Britain, said: "We certainly don't see the need for any international investigation team. The

It is hard to discuss human rights if the basic right of life is not granted

authors of the crimes and massacres are very well known. They have claimed responsibility here in London and elsewhere."

The latest killing appears to be the work of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), a radical organisation which has stepped up attacks since the largest rebel movement, the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), declared a ceasefire in October.

Algeria's military regime is

sensitive to criticism, and on Monday it rejected an unusual plea from France, normally a loyal ally, to strive to end the violence against its people. President Lamine Zouari is apparently afraid that any investigation may question the seeming lack of response by the security forces to some killings.

Discussion of the EU initiative will begin when a Ma-

ghreb working group meets in Brussels tomorrow. But foreign ministers are not due to discuss Algeria until the end of the month.

Mr Cook spoke of "appalling" violence, and added: "We are deeply concerned by the situation. It is very difficult to discuss human rights if the basic right of life is not being granted as presently in Algeria."

According to yesterday's press reports, there were no

survivors in the village of Had Chekala in Relizane province, which was razed on Sunday night. La Tribune said a second massacre, in which at least 117 people died, took place on Saturday night at Remka, also in Relizane, 150 miles west of Algiers.

There was no official or independent confirmation of either incident.

On Saturday, Liberte newspaper said 412 people had been killed in Relizane province in one night last week, though the government put the death toll at 78.

The reported new killings bring to more than 1,000 the number of civilians said by Algerian newspapers to have been slaughtered in the first six days of Ramadan.

Whatever the EU does it will not involve sanctions that would affect Algeria's vital energy sector. About 90 per cent of Algeria's oil and gas exports go to Western Europe. Italy is the main market, followed by Germany and France.

Leader comment, page 8



A boy peeps out from behind armed citizens of Daira de Ramika, western Algeria. The village was one of the four which were the scene of a massacre one week ago on the first day of Ramadan, when armed gangs killed more than 400 people

Khatami breaks American taboo

Reuters in Tehran

PRESIDENT Mohammed Khatami will break new ground this week when he becomes the first Iranian leader since the 1979 Islamic revolution to launch a dialogue with the American people through television, Iranian analysts said.

Mr Khatami, a relatively moderate Shi'ite Muslim cleric, stirred speculation about a thaw with Iran's arch-foe Washington when he voiced respect last month for the "great people of the United States" and said he wanted a dialogue with them.

But the analysis said that Mr Khatami, who has been careful not to provoke a backlash by powerful conservative forces against the limited reforms he has introduced, was unlikely to go beyond restating Tehran's case in its confrontation with the US.

"Advocating ties with the United States is political suicide in Iran, so Khatami is not going to do that. But just addressing the American people breaks an old taboo," one analyst said.

Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final say on foreign policy, has rejected a thaw. He said last week that Tehran was not making any moves towards rapprochement with Washington.

The Iranian media have repeatedly condemned reports in the West suggesting that Mr Khatami's call for a dialogue with the

American people and contacts between civilisations indicated that Tehran wanted to negotiate with Washington.

Iranian leaders have said that any improvement in relations can be considered only after Washington drops its hostile attitude towards Tehran and releases billions of dollars of Iranian assets blocked after militants seized the US embassy in Tehran during the revolution in 1979.

The US broke off diplomatic relations with Iran in 1980. Washington has imposed sanctions on Tehran, accusing it of backing terrorism and seeking nuclear weapons — charges denied by Iran.

An opinion poll by the English-language Tehran Times reported yesterday that most Iranians did not think it was the right time to restore relations with the US.

"Lawmakers, university teachers, women's affairs activists, the young and commercial authorities believe that none but the leader is to make a decision on the resumption of Tehran's ties with Washington," it said. The paper did not give the size of the poll.

One of several MPs interviewed by the paper, Esmat Beig-Moridi, was quoted as saying: "The United States should realise that there is no change in the Iranian stance for resumption of ties... Resumption of ties with America is a defeat for Iran and will disappoint Muslims across the world."

Sri Lankans call for royal regret

Susannah Price in Colombo

NATIONALIST groups in Sri Lanka have called on Prince Charles to apologise for Britain's behaviour during more than a century of colonial rule before he visits the country next month for the 50th anniversary celebrations of its independence.

The National Joint Committee, which represents the extremist wing of the Sinhalese majority, says the British killed thousands of people while suppressing popular rebellions in the 19th century. It also blames the British for taking land from the Sinhalese to give to British settlers. "Prince Charles or the Queen must either apologise or the visit should be cancelled," said Piyasena Disanayake, secretary of the committee — an umbrella group which claims 10,000 members.

"We cannot undo history, but if Prince Charles comes without this apology the people will recall these massacres, and relations between the UK and Sri Lanka are likely to suffer," he added.

Prince Charles is due to attend the ceremonies in Kandy, a lakeside hill town whose main attraction is the Temple of the Tooth — home to the country's most sacred

Buddhist relic. The town resisted Portuguese and Dutch colonialists before falling to British rule.

A big parade is planned for February 4 — the anniversary of independence — when President Chandrika Kumaratunga is expected to give a speech.

The committee may have been inspired by protests against the Queen's visit to India last year.

The Queen who refused demands from relatives of those shot by British troops at Amritsar in 1919 for an apology, did lay a wreath at an obelisk to the victims.

The Foreign Office said last month that there were no plans to change the visit in the light of the protests. There appears little support for the nationalists in the capital, Colombo, where observers say there is respect for the royal family. Thousands of people signed the book of condolence at the British High Commission in Colombo after the death last year of Diana, Princess of Wales.

The Sri Lankan government has made no comment on the visit. There is tight security in both Kandy and Colombo, but the government is less worried about the nationalists than about the Tamil Tiger separatists, blamed for a bomb attack in October and it's thought that the celebrations are an obvious target.

Pioneer of astrogeology on course to become man in the moon

Tim Radford
Science Editor

THE late Eugene Shoemaker was due to head for the moon early this morning. In the 1960s the planetary astronomer and founder of the science of astrogeology had dreamed of a career as an Apollo astronaut.

Last year, just before he was killed in a road accident in Australia, he said: "Not going to the moon and banging on it with my own hammer has been the biggest disappointment in life."

Colleagues at the University of Arizona have seen to it that he will get there in the end.

A tiny plastic capsule less than an inch square wrapped in a little brass tribute has been slipped inside the spacecraft Lunar Prospector, which is to make the first formal NASA exploration of the moon for 25 years.

In the capsule, with pictures of a comet and a crater and lines from Romeo and Juliet, are the ashes of Eugene Marie Shoemaker, born 1928, died 1997.

Shoemaker, with his wife Carolyn and an amateur astronomer, David Levy, first spotted Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9, the famous "string of pearls" which crashed into the planet Jupiter in a series of thermonuclear-scale spectaculars in 1994.

He was also a driving force behind the "bullet hole theory" of planetary science: the belief that the Earth, like the moon, Mars and other planets, is pounded at intervals by heavy objects from outer space.

But 30 years ago he turned the race to the moon into something more than a cold war stunt, persuading NASA to train its astronauts in geology — and even to include a sci-

tist on board the last Apollo mission.

United States researchers all but abandoned the moon in 1972. Dreamers still had plans for bases on the Earth's only natural satellite: entrepreneurs polished up schemes for commercial exploitation but nothing happened until a satellite in 1994 detected possible evidence of ice in a moon crater.

The news electrified researchers: oxygen could be quarried from moonrocks, and solar collectors could provide power, but no one could carry the water for a permanent base on the moon. Yet even a small store could be recycled.

So Lunar Prospector, 4ft 6ins in diameter, was built at a cost of \$28 million. It will circle in a polar orbit about 50 miles over the moon's surface. One instrument will map the magnetic fields over the entire surface.

Three others will "read" the moon's rocks for signs of minerals, gases and frozen water.

"If we can find sufficient water, it's going to be a land rush," said Bill Feldman, of the Los Alamos National Laboratory. "I'm sure there are people who would colonise the moon once sufficient water is available."

The geologist's ashes are not the first to go into space: remains of the US drugs guru Timothy Leary made the ultimate trip aboard a Pegasus launcher last year.

But Shoemaker will actually land on the moon: Lunar Prospector will stay in lunar orbit until its battery fails, and then crash.

"This is so important to us," said Carolyn, who survived the accident that killed her husband.

"It will bring a little closure, in a way, to our feelings. We will always know when we look at the moon that Gene is there."

Prospector heads for a distant Klondike

It is a mission of a lifetime, and the last of its kind. The US space agency is launching the Lunar Prospector to search for water on the moon.

The probe will orbit the moon in a polar orbit, allowing it to scan the entire surface.

It will search for water, minerals, and other resources that could be used to support a permanent lunar base.

The mission is part of NASA's Lunar Science Program, which aims to explore the moon's geology and resources.

The probe will be launched on January 16, 1998, and will reach the moon on January 23.

It will operate for at least three months, during which time it will collect data on the moon's surface.

The mission is named in honor of Eugene Shoemaker, a pioneer of astrogeology who died in 1997.

The probe will be launched from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

It will be the smallest lunar probe ever launched by NASA.

The mission is a testament to the enduring spirit of exploration and discovery.

Clinton hails era of balanced budgets

Martin Kettle in Washington

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton has announced that the United States government will be able to balance its budget in 1999. His statement this week that the target which has preoccupied American politicians for nearly 20 years will be met three years earlier than anticipated came with government predictions of future surpluses.

There is now sharp political debate about what should be done with those surpluses. While not ruling out tax cuts, Mr Clinton wants to use the money to bolster government social programmes, including social security and education.

Yesterday he announced that the 65-plus retirement health-care insurance scheme would be extended in certain circumstances to cover people as young as 55.

The news electrified the House of Representatives, which has been dominated by mounting public-sector deficits, fuelled by the mid-1970s oil price increase, 1980s unemployment and early 1990s recession.

Deficits shaped the politics of the Reagan-Thatcher era, which tried — and largely failed — to meet demands on both sides of the Atlantic for an end to the high taxes and costs endemic in the spiralling spending bill. But they also shaped the Clinton-Blair era, causing leftwing parties to abandon Keynesian economics and "tax-and-spend" policies in favour of govern-

ment programmes marked by "fiscal responsibility" and "hard choices".

But an economic boom, full employment and fiscal austerity are about to achieve the US's first balanced budget since President Richard Nixon in 1969.

And unlike that isolated example, the only balanced federal budget since 1969 promises to be the first of several.

"You'll see surpluses as far as the eye can see," Gene Spurling, the director of the president's national economic council, said.

Deficit politics dictated a political convergence between left and right. In the 30 years to 1975, the US federal deficit only once exceeded the \$100 billion (\$60 billion) mark, even at the height of the Vietnam war.

But in the 30 years after, it only once fell below that mark. Between 1983 and 1994, despite Ronald Reagan's promise to balance the budget, the deficit was consistently above \$200 billion.

Mr Clinton's announcement of a surplus this year of \$22 billion means political parties can again choose different paths — to spend the surpluses on public goods or private ones.

Mr Clinton has cautioned against "using a projected future surplus as a pretext for returning to the failed policies of the past".

But he is likely to seize the opportunity to increase spending on education and medical research.

The White House senior adviser, Rahm Emanuel, said the balanced budget created conditions in which the administration could promote "a different vision of government as an affirmative force, a force for good".

Such programmes and language underline the growing difference between the Democrats and Mr Gingrich's Republicans. Mr Gingrich says the federal surplus should be used to reduce the continuing national debt, but that he had a goal of "at least a small tax cut every year".

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A much-needed start

But the EU needs strong words to wake Algiers

ALGERIA HAS reached a critical mass of tragedy where — at long last — the outside world is compelled to pay attention. The new EU initiative which coincides with the start of the British presidency may be fuzzy in detail but it is a much-needed start. The Algerian regime's protest against interference in its "internal affairs" is weakened by the manifest failure to prevent bloodshed on a huge scale. As Bosnia has shown, sovereignty is no longer an absolute bar to foreign concern where human rights are violated, and standing idly by has become less acceptable. How the international community should act is much more difficult to decide, but act it must.

We have reached this point much later in time than if Algeria had been Bosnia in the sense of being targeted by the Western media ever since the emergency began. The EU could equally well have resolved to act a year ago — when there was also a dramatic escalation of violence during Ramadan. But a country where foreign TV crews are excluded (or do not dare to venture) enjoys a degree of immunity from foreign concern. Nor does Algeria sit astride European lines of communication where it cannot be ignored. The fact that it sits on top of large oil reserves has had the opposite effect of dissuading some foreign governments from questioning too closely the behaviour of Algeria's military-dominated regime. The decision of that regime five years ago to thwart an Islamist victory in the general election should have been firmly condemned (as this paper did at the time). It has been argued that the decision was justified because such a victory would have resulted in a repressive successor regime — particularly in its attitude to women. Whether this is sufficient grounds for interfering with a people's democratic choice is debatable. In practice the outcome

could hardly have been worse than the consequences so far in which 65,000 people — including large numbers of innocent women — have been killed, and thousands of families have been destroyed.

The question is how to translate intentions into specifics, particularly when initiatives may be unacceptable to the sitting government. There is a clear need for direct aid for the victims and their families if NGOs can be found with sufficient brave volunteers to provide it on the spot. Yesterday it appeared that the regime might just be persuaded to accept a UN rapporteur on extra-judicial killings, as urged by the Human Rights High Commissioner Mary Robinson last month. That is a welcome step forward although it falls short of an investigative enquiry. The fact is that until the obscurity which surrounds these massacres is dispelled, no attempt to tackle the underlying political causes is going to be successful. The suspicion, true or false, that forces within the government prefer to encourage a perpetuation of the violence rather than seek accommodation with the more moderate Islamists can only encourage further extremism.

The EU's concern should be calmly expressed, but with emphasis. France's willingness to support the German initiative, now taken up by Britain as EU president, is a useful signal — so long as it is not undercut later by contradictory statements from Paris. American concern is useful but needs to be conveyed with more vigour. Yesterday the State Department argued laboriously that oil and gas sanctions against Algeria would "not necessarily be in our interests." On the contrary, the threat to consider them may have more effect than mere exhortations on the Algerian government to "do more to protect its civilians." Of course it should be doing more — but that is part of the problem.

All change at the judiciary

It's out of touch and out of date: time for serious changes

JACK STRAW faces a new crisis — a crisis of public confidence in British courts and the judiciary. More than 80 per cent of the people believe sentences are too lenient and judges "out of touch". The findings could not be more authoritative. They were produced within the Home Office by the 1996 British Crime Survey, described by the department's research director as "one of the most important pieces of research we've commissioned in recent years". The survey documents the cause of this new crisis: "systematic public ignorance" about what is happening in the criminal justice system. On every front the public is shatteringly ignorant of criminal trends — grossly over-estimating the scale of violent crime, grossly under-estimating the use of prison, and totally failing to register the fall in recorded crime. The researchers identify three categories of villains who have helped perpetuate these misperceptions: the media, judiciary and politicians.

Ministers are not likely to do much about the media, even though the survey shows the most misinformed people are tabloid readers. But there is quite a lot ministers could do about producing a more open and communicative judiciary. Remember the judiciary was the one public profession that escaped modernisation by the great nineteenth century reformers who transformed the civil service, universities and armed services. The first step in moving the judiciary from a medieval clan to a

modern profession would be a modern appointments and promotion system. This was set out in detail by a 1992 Justice report which wanted to replace the current secret selection process and its endemic old boy bias shutting out women and ethnic minorities with an open and independent appointments committee which would advertise vacancies, abolish arbitrary age limits, and end the undue emphasis on advocacy skills. Much of this was adopted by Labour in opposition but, alas, once Lord Irvine found his seat on the woolsack, he dropped it and kept the appointments to himself. It's time this decision was challenged. It's time there was systematic monitoring of judicial performance and an end to their three centuries old pantomime dress, which encourages pomposity, reduces common sense and inhibits witnesses and litigants alike. Derry Irvine should be reminded his government is meant to be a modernising one.

How should the politicians change? The survey sets out a sensible strategy condemning the way in which they have played to the populist gallery and reminding them that five years of hard-line rhetoric has done nothing to restore public confidence. It is time the Home Secretary was ready, as earlier predecessors were, to tell the public of the ways in which prison does not work. The survey finds the public prefer more community programmes to more prisons. A pity the Home Secretary hasn't picked up the message yet.

Watering the roots of creativity

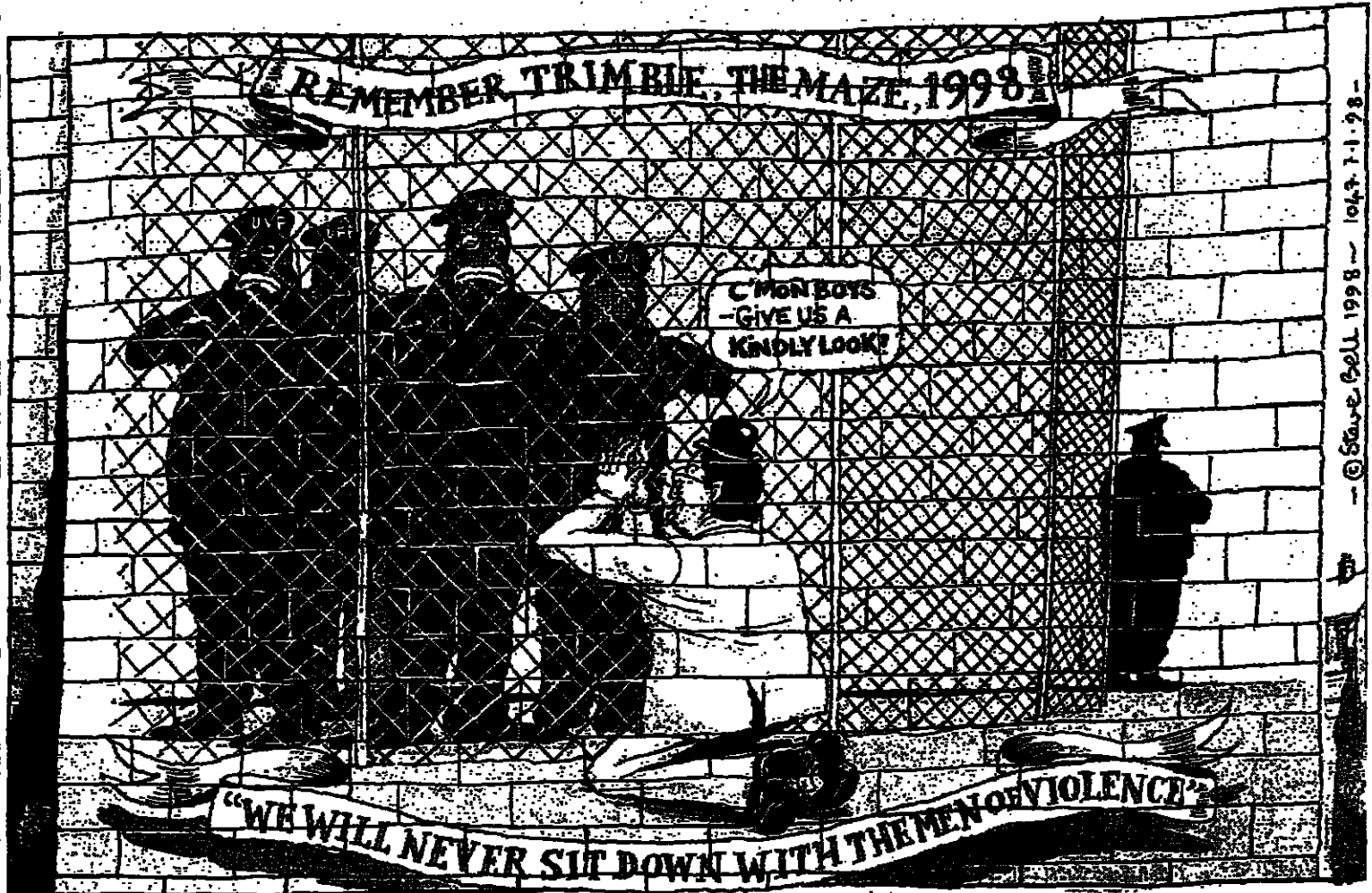
It doesn't always mean spending money: ask Oasis

WHAT SPARKS creativity? Last year the Government, in keeping with a pre-electoral pledge, gave tax relief to the film industry and set up a committee to boost its prospects. The only problem was that during the time between making the pledge and the election, the film industry in Britain started booming of its own accord and wasn't so much in need of help. Labour also promised an elected mayor to revive London and undo the damage that Tory neglect had inflicted. The problem here was that this coincided inexplicably with London becoming the gastronomic and cultural capital of the world.

Next week the Government will announce the creation of a committee to review all policies affecting the music industry which, rightly, believes it has been ignored by government in recent years. Again, the problem is that this neglect has coincided with impressive success at home and abroad. In the

decade to 1996 wholesale music sales doubled to over £1 billion. At home all but one of 1997's top albums were by UK artists. Compare that with the motor industry — all ten best selling cars were foreign. It is not obvious that the music industry is more in need of a governmental review — except perhaps to protect it from the unexpected effects of other departmental decisions.

Imogen O'Rourke warned in yesterday's Guardian that forcing young people off the dole could stifle Britain's artistic revival which, she said, depended on long periods of DSS-fed creativity for groups like Oasis. That may be true, but it doesn't explain why France and Germany with far bigger dole queues haven't swept the musical world off its feet. We don't really know why the country experiences periods of creativity. But it is much easier for governments, unintentionally, to suffocate such surges than to create them.



Letters to the Editor

When truth is the real refugee

YOUR article on the Schengen regime (EU passport-free regime) begins, January 6, rightly highlights the sorry state of EU immigration policy, paralysed by fear, confusion and lack of vision. The principle of refugee protection, however, is the first victim of this deepening policy morass. Although the majority of asylum-seekers — including the Kurds you feature — continue to arrive from countries characterised by violence and/or human rights abuse, they are increasingly presented by politicians and the media as illegal immigrants, bogus asylum-seekers or abusers of our systems. This, of course, serves the purpose of reducing public opposition to restrictive measures.

Your article, unfortunately, does nothing to counter the confusion and misinformation that suffuse this policy area. The term "refugee" is not synonymous with "illegal immigrant" and should not be treated as such by our reporters. We would do well to remember that refugee protection is a human rights issue which has been downgraded at our own peril.

Sarah Collinson,
 Department of Politics,
 University of Reading.

Crime: fact and fiction

THE British Crime Survey's discovery that the public are deeply ignorant about crime and the workings of the courts is not such a profound revelation to those working in the probation service. ("Crime 'crisis' based on myth," January 6). We have long been aware of the public's contradictory thinking: general support for harsher penalties but surprisingly lenient choices in sentencing exercises that reveal the circumstances of the offence, victim and offender.

However, there is still a missing element. Public curiosity about which types of sentences have the best rehabilitative performance is still undetectable. Assuming that most victims are interested in avoiding further victimisation, questions about how a sentence can reduce offending should be commonly asked. They are not.

To everybody's shame in the criminal justice system, a rigorous scientific approach to researching, designing and implementing sentences based on reliable evaluation on reducing criminal behaviour has only recently come into vogue — a move much delayed by the simplifications of "prison works". Gradually the

information on which sentences should be applied to which offenders is becoming clearer, but it does not easily conform to the "hard or soft" concept of sentences. Instilling in the public a new way of thinking about punishment and rehabilitation is the next challenge for politicians, those working around the courts and with offenders and victims.

Mary Honeyball,
 Gen Sec, Association of Chief
 Officers of Probation,
 212 Whitechapel Road,
 London E1 1BJ.

EVEN if there were 10 per cent fewer homicides in 1997 than in 1996, you cannot draw the conclusion from this one-year change that "the British murder rate is going down". Even if the number of convicted criminals sent to jail was higher in 1996 than in 1997, you cannot draw the conclusion that they are increasingly likely to go to jail. We would have to know how many were convicted.

And does the BCS study really say that "news values mitigate against balanced coverage"?
 Charles Mantom,
 26 York Gardens,
 Bristol BS8 4LN.

'Blair's babes' get into trouble

IT is ironic that "Blair's babes" have come to power just when the voices of real women are beginning to be heard (The new motherhood, December 31). Melissa Benn's work will raise a cheer among those of us who are sick of privileged women, who set the parameters of debate in the media pretending that not only should we want it all, but that we can have it all.

It might be fun to juggle your life if you have nannies, cleaners and a top tax-rate salary, but the rest of us need a break. How irrelevant and old hat those New Labour voting-fodder feminists look from where we stand.

Joan Molloy,
 25a Theodore Road,
 London SE13 8PT.

THE much-faunted statistic that most mothers want to work is a conflation. Most mothers want the additional income that a job would bring but they don't want the actual job. They've already got something much more important and interesting to do.

Our "Blair's babes" society is brutal to mothers, and harsh to children. Mothers must be paid an adequate allowance so that they are not forced to work outside the home.

Magdalen Barnes,
 St Mary's Road,
 London NW10.

Some ideas on how to sort out this business of boys and girls

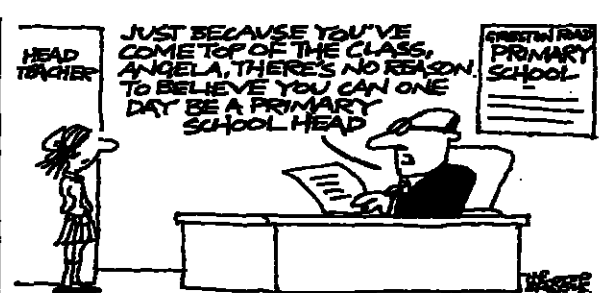
ANGELA Phillips's argument that girls have attained a self-confidence and self-esteem (Close schools for girls, January 6) does not tally with my experience in Liverpool schools. I wonder if she has ever walked the corridors and heard the terms "fat slag", "slapper", "twat" and "big arse" shouted at girls, as I have in the last 12 months.

It is the culture of the male American locker room that needs to be addressed, not the dragging down of girls' education to that of boys. It is not my daughter's job to educate boys: it is the job of society.

Brian Brown,
 33 Oxford Street,
 Liverpool L15 6HX.

JUDGING by John Carvel's article (Help for boys lagging behind at school, January 6) the Government's solution to this problem is not, as might be imagined, to encourage more boys to enter the primary sector, or to improve their status, but to consider higher salaries for primary heads to make it a more attractive career for both sexes. The logic of this approach evades me.

Terry Campbell,
 188 Summergangs Road,
 Hull HU8 8LN.



THE current debate about why girls are out-performing boys in educational terms seems to overlook one factor: namely that we don't give our boys as much education. So many girls, and so few boys, are female — gender is expected to juggle domestic duties and family responsibilities with school work and social life.

One consequence of this is that boys are not well prepared to do the personal organisation necessary to plan their time, manage a varied workload and understand the importance of tackling life's necessary evils, all necessary components of successful study.

K J Murch,
 Amara Cottage,
 Talston, Devon.

tion of women in top professional jobs. Surely one source of male under-achievement at school is complacency bred by the realisation that men hold most of the powerful, well-paid jobs.

Dr Julie Haviland,
 19 Florida Drive,
 Exeter EX4 5EX.

WE are concerned that Angela Phillips should focus on Clapton School without making any effort to contact us and find out why we feel so passionately about girls' education. Clapton is the most successful school in inner London, and the second most successful school in the country. We want to build on our success rather than place it at risk by changing the character of the school.

We also question the dubious premise on which she is challenging the school's campaign by the implication that parents of certain religious groups feel that girls need protection from boys. Clapton is a proud multi-ethnic community, and parents and pupils of many religions and none support the campaign to stay all-girls.

Bernadette Cronin,
 Vice-chair of Governors,
 Clapton School, Hackney.

CLARE Longridge (So where is Big Sister? January 6) asks why the new Labour women MPs have not stood up for women-friendly policies. They should read what Christabel Pankhurst wrote in 1903: "It will be said, perhaps, that the interests of women will be safe in the hands of the men's Labour Party. Never in the history of the world have the interests of those without power to defend themselves been properly served by others".

Prof June Purvis,
 School of Social and
 Historical Studies,
 University of Portsmouth.

I AM sick and tired of your newspaper describing Camille Paglia as a "feminist". (Talking heads, January 5). She is a total anti-woman abomination who should be laughed at, not listened to. Paglia does not "support women's rights", but gives the impression that she supports the right of men to rape. If this makes her a feminist, I'm a serial killer.

Julie Bindei,
 Research Centre on Violence,
 Abuse & Gender Relations,
 Leeds Metropolitan University.

Please include a full address on all letters. Shorter letters are more likely to appear.

Hope dashed

THE law does not stop changes to listed buildings as you suggest (Period stone cottage must have sixties pebble-dash, say planners, January 6). It merely controls them by requiring owners to get listed building consent from the local council.

Adam Alexander appears from your photograph to have exposed rough stonework, which was probably never intended to be seen, and then had it masonry by a passing elephant. A handsome building is now very ugly, and it seems that the work was done illegally, without listed building consent.

It is good to know that the Forest of Dean council has become involved. Does the Guardian think there should be one law for television producers, and another for Teresa Gorman MP and the rest of us?
 Andy Foster,
 23 Fourth Avenue,
 Selly Park,
 Birmingham B29 7BU.

Play it straight

YOUR report of the RSC's efforts to produce a politically-correct version of the Mystery Plays by Edward Kemp (January 1) is quite extraordinary. To begin with, there is no such thing as the Mystery Plays. Each town and craftsman's guild wrote their own. To confound them into one text is an act of cultural barbarism.

In the matter of removing hostile references to Jews and Muslims, this seems to be a form of madness. If we take the York Cycle, we can hardly remain ignorant of the context in which over a thousand Jews died in a massacre (or a mass suicide pre-empting this) in York in 1190. Either the plays are an historical record, or they are not, and we do not have the right to deny history. The point is to remember it.

Perhaps Mr Kemp should turn his talents to The Merchant of Venice or The Jew of Malta.

Stephen Lutman,
 6 Stone Street,
 Faversham, Kent ME13 8PT.

Off the pitch

YOU are absolutely right to bring John Motson to task (Why this man needs to visit his optician, January 5) and Jonathan Davies (Letters, January 6) is absolutely wrong.

Motson's ignorance is compounded by his inability to comprehend that he has caused offence. If a commentator were to remark that say, Teddy Sheringham and Alan Shearer look very much alike, they would not be regarded as racist, just blind, stupid and incapable of doing their job.

Richard Lindley,
 51 Robert Street,
 London NW1 3JS.

JONATHAN Davies seems to suggest that to see the differences between black people, one must have grown up amongst black people. Must I have grown up amongst cars to tell the difference between a Lada and a Rolls Royce?
 Colin Sealy,
 27 Harvard Road,
 London SE13 6SE.

A Country Diary

THE WREKIN. The year begins its slow spiral out of the hill. Looking down from the top of Maddocks Hill, I hear the raven before I see it — calling from the barking darkness of its journey up from the old quarry floor. It circles slowly, reaching long, blue-black wings into the southwesterly, a wind propelling great banks of marauding cloud up over the hills of south Shropshire. Sunlight catches plumes of steam from the Bulwark power station in the Severn Gorge to the east, and Allscot sugar beet factory to the west. A dark cloud looms over the Cleve Hills. The sky piles northwards into the murky distance of the plain. As the raven's carousel widens, it spills air from under its wings by folding them and flipping sideways, like a fighter-plane, into the wind to tumble a few feet and then, catching the spiralling course it has set for itself, soars upward and upward again. With each "grace" the raven

speaks for the year: its death and rebirth; its bad luck and good omens; its storms, hidden weapons, buried treasure... For corvidomancers, each wonderful, rasping croak-bark is ominous. But this raven's death-tidings and songs of wild joy answer to no one. Why should it? The sky is full of omens of its own: it speaks of rains that will lash, storms that will crash, gales that will thrash through trees and make mischief in towns. As the raven calls and wheels, dips and tumbles, this midnight spirit of the winter sun is joined by its mate, from the north. Together, they dance higher and, as the circle widens, they vanish into the Wrekin woods — the silver-purple of birches; the smoke-green of oaks; and the fox-pelt patches of bracken. The ravens are gone and the new year is with us. Whatever we may make of the omens of birds or stormy skies, we remain none the wiser.

PAUL EVANS

Diary

Charles Nevin

SORRY, yes, it's me again. Those weather-men warned there was worse to come, and they were right. Floods in Chingford. No wonder it's so quiet in here. Still, they do say it's a still wind, don't they? Apparently everybody has been making soup to keep warm, so Tesco are reporting a 20 per cent rise in sales of leeks and cauliflowers and cabbages. Carrots and onions are also in demand. And there's more: in Swansea, at Stainsbury's, a 75-year-old grandmother had to fight off a man who wanted her two pears, the last in the shop. Makes you proud. It has also given me an exciting idea: buy about a Millennium Allotment, featuring giant root vegetables? Why not?

BUT at least I'm now a little better placed to tell you things, a little more "in the loop", as they say, than I was yesterday. It was the Home Secretary's son. I learnt this last night in the Cornet in Battersea when a chap sidled up to me and wondered if I "wanted to Jack Straw some dope, man" and I asked him what on earth he was going on about. I can tell you, too, that Anthea Turner's bed measures six foot by six foot, has a mattress with pocketed springs, and was bought at John Lewis. "My bed is my haven," says Anthea. "I adore it." Next!

DESPITE a fair measure of scorn from those who should know better, I am determined to continue my campaign for a new start in this newspaper's relations with the Government. Cut the cynicism, give them a fair crack, I say, and to hell with the commercial base. And today, I am delighted to be positive about the premier. Some people were just a little critical when Mr Blair broke off from the duty free at Heathrow Airport on the way back from his dream holiday in the Seychelles to have a quick chat with Daniel arap Moi, the shock winner of the Kenyan elections, weren't they? They should have waited. For, the very next day, when he was sworn in, Moi promised to be "more sensitive" to the needs of his citizens. Familiar, that phrase, isn't it? Remarkable, I think you'll agree. A bit more of this sort of education, and Dan will be standing for Lord Mayor of London.

CHEER up! It's not that bad, you know. Noel's House Party is not going to finish, after all. And I know research in Belfast shows that you can damage your lungs blowing up party balloons, but remember that work in Southampton suggests that living in a submarine can reduce your chances of getting cancer. And did you know that only days after she was born, Christine Hamilton's brother James, who is two years older, tried to smother her? "Doubtless it was just an early case of sibling rivalry," says Christine. Doubtless. And what a lucky escape!

WHAT else, what else. Oh, yes, that's right. A man called Brian rang up to ask why all these adverts for sofas on the television are so awful. I tried to tell him that the sofa advert, particularly those featuring Bruce Forsyth, and that man with the deep voice, the blazer and the moustache, are a chartered part of British culture, like panto, but he wasn't convinced. Someone else rang to say that callers to the Dome Secretary are now being put through to a robotic, female American voice which says, "Memory is full. Answer function is off." And that's about it. I gave that chap in the Cornet short shrift, by the way.

BIT of trouble in Stow, though. A cat, run over. Very nasty. Luckily, PC Phil Groom, a pet lover, was passing and volunteered to take the injured animal to the nearest vet. He put it in a cardboard box, and put the box on top of his car while he got in. Having driven off, he noticed through his rearview mirror that the said box was lying in the road. The cat, I regret to report, was now dead. The already upset PC Groom was then further distressed to discover that the cat was the beloved pet of one of his colleagues. It never rains, eh? Bye!



Let the people decide who is or is not a Jew

Commentary
Jonathan Freedland

THERE are variations on this joke but Howard Jacobson cracked the best version. While battle raged on the vexed question of "who is a Jew?" the comic novelist was musing on the historic discomfort of Jews in the countryside. They always seemed to get bitten, or tread in something unpleasant. He realised the rabbi could stop fretting, the definition was obvious: "A Jew is a person who can't name a bird, a fish or a tree."

That gag worked well among heavily-urban Anglo-Jewry but it hardly translates to Israel — a Mediterranean, alfresco place where the Jewish people have finally made their peace with nature. Besides, the "who is a Jew?" debate is now no laughing matter. At stake is an issue which has meant personal heart-

break to thousands of Jews and the people who love them. At the end of this month it could well trigger the collapse of Binyamin Netanyahu's right-wing government. If not a constitutional crisis. But it has also created an opportunity. Now, as Israel marks the 50th anniversary of its creation, the Jewish people have a chance to determine who they really are.

At the root of the row is an attempt by Reform and Conservative Jews to gain equal status in Israel with Orthodox Jews. At the moment, Orthodox rabbis have a monopoly over all religious life — marriages, divorce and burial. Civil weddings are not recognised in Israel, nor is a ceremony conducted by a Reform rabbi. Crucially, Orthodox control extends to conversion, the process by which a non-Jew becomes Jewish. Only an Orthodox conversion will count.

Understandably, Reform Jews want to redress this imbalance and achieve parity in the eyes of the law. Last year they filed a petition with the Supreme Court, which would have allowed them to convert non-Jews. The Orthodox shot back, tabling a preemptive Conversion Bill de-

signed to entrench their current monopoly and so the the hands of the judges. Israel's finance minister, Ya'akov Ne'eman — himself highly religious — has until the end of this month to broker a compromise between the warring denominations. From afar this looks like arcane bickering, an angels-on-a-pinhead dispute among the hotbeds of the Middle East. But it has echoes far beyond Israel. For the bulk of American Jewry — still a larger community of Jews than all Israel — belong to Reform or Conservative congregations. Many of US Jewry's leading lights are married to non-Orthodox converts. If the current bill goes through, they say, Israel will be declaring — as a matter of state policy — that these people are not real Jews. As the Ha'aretz daily warned darkly, "the disintegration of the Jewish people will be hastened".

Of course, as a matter of basic pluralism, Israel should grant equal respect to Jews of every denomination. But the stories of love frustrated, of rejection and bureaucratic obstinance are legion — and they are not confined to Israel. Indeed, British Orthodoxy sets the most exacting standards in world Jewry, demanding a potential convert submit to a process that can

last between three and seven years. Yet there is nothing set in halachic stone demanding such stand-offishness toward the wannabe Jew — even if tradition tells the rabbis to reject a gentile three times, just to be sure his quest is sincere. A leading American Conservative rabbi and scholar, Harold Schulweis, has shocked his colleagues by positively seeking out potential converts. He argues that the Jews had always been a proselytising people — until the Romans banned such missionary work with the Edict of Milan in 380 AD. Schulweis points out that the first convert was Abraham, the father of the Jewish people. The rabbi's message is to lower the drawbridge, and let all who want to sign up for Judaism join the Jewish people.

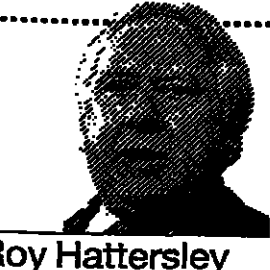
Such words will be sweet balm to those bruised by the exclusivity of the current rules. But we could go further. Contrary to popular myth, the so-called Zionist Revolution was not chiefly about land, borders or even the statehood celebrated this May. Instead it was a declaration that the Jews were more than a religious sect — a nation, capable of determining its own future. That surely means letting the Jewish majority, rather than an unelected clique of rabbis, determine who is or is not a Jew. The simplest course will be to learn the lesson of Ruth, the great-grandmother of King David. She was not born a Jew but her conversion was beautifully simple. "Where you go, I will go," she said. "Your people are my people." If that was good enough for her, it should be good enough for us.

The Jews had always been proselytisers — until the Romans banned such work in 380 AD

There is a wider need here. Jews need to adopt a looser, more modern attitude to their entire identity. At present, to be universally recognised as a Jew one has to be the child of a Jewish mother or have been converted according to Jewish law, halacha. The sages came up with the "matrilineal" rule because the identity of a mother is always certain — while paternity can be a bit more suspect. But how much sense does this make now, in the age of DNA testing? If one Jewish parent is enough to make a Jew, why not let it be the father as well as the mother? Ultra-progressives already accept "patrilineal" descent: the rest of the Jewish world might want to follow.

While they're at it, they should think again about the whole Jewish approach to potential newcomers. At present large obstacles are put in the way of would-be converts, especially if their motive is to marry a Jewish partner. The stories of love frustrated, of rejection and bureaucratic obstinance are legion — and they are not confined to Israel. Indeed, British Orthodoxy sets the most exacting standards in world Jewry, demanding a potential convert submit to a process that can

She's doing the top job which I once longed for



Roy Hattersley

BACK in May, when Tony Blair formed his Government, I was absolutely certain that it was a mistake to send Mo Mowlam to the Northern Ireland Office. Dr Mowlam was obviously both clever and ambitious — two qualities which, while not essential to political success, are vastly preferable to supine mediocrity. But her second most visible characteristic was affability. And, in a secretary of state, that is not always an asset. I recalled a television news bulletin which showed Dr Mowlam, then a member of the Shadow Cabinet, putting a chunky arm round Jim Molyneux, the crusty old leader of the Unionist Party. It could not have been more of a problem — doing serious business with the red-faced men in bowler hats and the sashes that their fathers wore.

And the idea of her standing up to the whey-faced assassins of the Maze seemed even more improbable. Back in May, I knew that Tony Blair had made a terrible mistake. I now know that the Prime Minister was right and I was wrong. If it seems a strange moment to declare my support for the beleaguered Secretary of State, I can only say in my own defence that the change of heart and mind is not an overnight conversion. My admiration for Dr Mowlam — as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland as well as a human being — has increased with almost every occasion on which I have watched her on television or listened to her on the radio.

SHE speaks of Northern Ireland people with an unselfconscious affection and describes her task of brokering peace with an optimism which, if not quite irrational, is based on rigorously recording the evidence for hope and assiduously ignoring the causes of despair. The affability, which once so concerned me, has made Dr Mowlam cheerfully indomitable. That, above all else, is the characteristic that is needed to nudge Northern Ireland back towards sanity and civilisation. There was a time, more than 20 years ago, when I longed to be Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Throughout the golden age of British parliamentary politics, Ireland was the issue which preoccupied successive cabinets. I could not imagine

how anyone could not want to walk in the footsteps of Forster, Morley and Balfour and attempt to succeed where defeat, first in the House of Commons and then in the Lords, had forced Gladstone to fail. I do not know how well I would have done the job then. But I would make a complete nonsense of it now. I would be incapable of accommodating the absurdity of convicted prisoners giving press conferences from jail on their mobile telephones, leaders of paramilitary organisations talking openly about the resumption of murder and violence, and grown-up politicians (who claim to represent the law-abiding majority) announcing that the whole peace process will be at risk if the political representatives of those same paramilitaries decide to withdraw from the Stormont talks.

No doubt Dr Mowlam is appalled by what a modern WB Years might call the Terrible Idioty of Northern Ireland — the madness which makes men kill and maim to prove, in the words of a paragon in Monday's Newsnight, that their little faction is not being "treated as the underdog". But she conceals her contempt and remains both poised and patient. BEFORE I came to my senses and recognised Mo Mowlam's virtues, I was sure that she would talk too much to keep the peace negotiations in proper balance. There has been some loose talk — including speculation about the re-routing of Orange marches. But even Dr Mowlam's verbal eccentricity is working to her, and Northern Ireland's, advantage. I have never had the remotest sympathy for the "troops out" movement. The idea that the British army is an instrument of colonial oppression is clearly ridiculous. And the contention that taxpayers in Birmingham and Derby have no obligation to contribute to the cost of security in Belfast and Derry is both silly and selfish. But it is impossible to watch the television pictures of what is now going on in Northern Ireland without feeling that "they" are different from "us". We do not kill people because of their religion. Nor do our politicians talk in such violent language. Troops are not necessary on our streets because we do not set fire to buses, stone policemen and bomb public buildings. The one thing that makes Northern Ireland seem like Britain is Mo Mowlam talking about its problems in always conversational and sometimes colloquial English. She is — despite that doctorate and that awful diminutive first name — essentially one of us. Nobody I know has a better chance of maintaining support for the hope that Northern Ireland can become an equally normal part of the United Kingdom.



Sprawling suburbia

George Monbiot accuses the Government of allowing developers to ride rough-shod over all its hopes of saving the countryside from the car

FOUR hundred and nineteen MPs think traffic reduction is a good idea. They are supporting the Road Traffic Reduction Bill, due for debate at the end of this month. But, while the transport ministers Gavin Strang and Glenda Jackson have both signed up, their colleagues in the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) have so far failed to grace the matter with their attention. At least no one can accuse Richard Caborn, the planning minister, or Nick Raynsford, the minister for construction, of inconsistency. In November, Richard Caborn announced that half the 4.4 million new homes he claims are needed in England will be built in the countryside. Nick Raynsford has repeatedly

stressed his enthusiasm for new suburban developments. Their plans, if implemented, will lay waste to their department's commitment to "integrated transport", of which last year's green paper made such resolute boasts. The department brought together just seven months ago to ensure that transport planning and environmental planning don't conflict already seems to be pulling itself apart. The main component of future traffic management is effective development control. Disaggregated, low-density housing of the kind Raynsford and Caborn envisage is impossible to serve with efficient public transport. Even without taking its new housing figures into account, the DETR's projects already show rural traffic increasing substantially faster than un-

derstandable. The Government can tax, cajole and antagonise car drivers as much as it likes, but the people of the new suburban sprawl will have no choice but to stay behind the wheel. Traffic jams will be hardwired into the landscape. The battle over new housing has been portrayed, notably by the chairman of the town & country planning association, Professor Peter Hall, whose increasingly crude and bizarre public statements lend a bogus intellectual authority to Caborn's plans, as a narrow environmental problem: humans vs. nature. But the principal hazard of suburban sprawl is a crisis of social provision. Inadequate transport is one of the greatest sources of deprivation in rural areas. If you live in the countryside and have no car (and one third of British households have no access to a car) you are excluded from the world of shopping, services and employment. Greenfield land on the fringes of cities is being used by some local authorities as a dustbin for the poor. Without shops, with miserably inadequate and expensive public

transport, these new out-of-town, out-of-sight and out-of-mind estates are turning into gigantic poverty traps. When the rich flee to their rather more congenial rural enclaves, the flow of wealth is choked. Urban decay and ghettoisation become almost ineradicable. Ironically, one of the factors limiting the provision of houses in cities is the extraordinarily generous allowance both local authorities and central government make for the car. Some councils insist that as many as three off-road parking spaces be allocated to every new home. When the London borough of Islington tried to halve its parking requirements, the Government office for London, now part of the DETR, forbade it.

A STUDY published this week by the London Planning Advisory Committee and the DETR shows that reducing parking is one of the principal means by which London could accommodate nearly all its new households in good quality, low-rise homes with gardens without having to make use of

new development land. But do the ministers for planning and construction want to know? Both have made speeches which suggest that they are listening rather too hard to the house builders' federation and the property industry forum. Property companies have bought vast tracts of land on the fringes of towns and cities in the hope of getting planning permission for new housing there, raising its value several hundredfold. It is easier and far more profitable to build on greenfield sites than on urban wastes. Developers have little interest in constructing new towns (which could, conceivably, both generate their own economies and make use of effective public transport) and every interest in the much cheaper option of investing in suburban sprawl. John Prescott has to decide whether he wants the DETR to become a department for integration of transport, development and prosperity — or a department for physical and social fragmentation. If it's to be the first option, then nothing less than urgent integration than his continuacious ministers.

This is Teacher speaking



Esther Dyson

Email to: Tony Blair
From: Esther Dyson
Date: January 7, 1998
Subject: The Net and schools

TONY, since I hear you're a modern guy and excited about the Net, I'm writing this e-mail rather than going through formal channels. I understand you want to wire up all the schools of the United Kingdom, and I think that's a great idea. From all that I know, you're well aware of the power of this new medium. Its ability to deliver information

worldwide, its importance for the citizens and the workers of the future, and so on. (If I were actually online here, I'd include a hyperlink to lots of inspiring stories and sites.) However, the Net is not just a tool for educating the children in each classroom, but a powerful medium that could actually change the educational system overall. If the UK is anything like the US, parents feel that they aren't close enough to their schools, that they can't communicate with the teachers, that they don't know enough to pick the right school for their child. In fact, they feel like cogs in a giant bureaucracy rather than customers of a friendly, interested service organisation. The Net can change that by serving as a way for schools to communicate with parents, not just as a repository of information for the pupils. Parents in the UK already have more choice than in

the US about where their children go to school, but they often lack information about schools beyond overall test scores. And once their children are enrolled, they know little more. What courses are available? How do children's scores improve over time (showing the impact of the school rather than of the children who attend it)? And what about your own child? Is he doing well? Does the teacher understand that your daughter spent the summer in rural France and could have a lively class discussion? Or that your son's younger brother is ill and he may be a little distracted this term? As in any other sphere of life, well-informed "customers" result in more choices and better offerings. This will not happen merely as a result of government funding or even government programmes. Recently I asked a friend of mine who trains teachers for a New York bank

if she could help me collect a focus group of inner-city parents to talk about their schools. Several didn't turn up, and of course what we got was hardly a random sample, but the kind of involves parents who would take the trouble to come and talk to a complete stranger about school the day before Christmas Eve. Nonetheless, I learned a lot. All four of the parents, hardly rich people, have computers at home. All of them would like better communications with their children's teachers, but no one had ever thought of sending e-mail to a teacher.

THese parents are eager to be involved with their kids' education, but they don't know how. One of the parents, Dixie Estes, is active in a multi-school technology committee, and she told us about the New York City Mayor's plan for computer use and deployment in the city's schools. Tyrone Korokous, father of a child in one of those schools, had never heard of this plan. Beyond such programmes, the government needs to let people know about them and inspire them to participate. (In business, the profit motive and the market take care of spreading the word.) Obviously, most people are not yet online, but the first few can set an example and prove its value for others. You, Tony, are in a unique position to inspire people. For example, you could solicit comments by e-mail from parents and kids. You could encourage parents to use e-mail to keep in touch with teachers. You could encourage businesses to let their employees use company access to the Net (on lunch hours and before and after work) to communicate with teachers, other parents and kids. You could encourage teachers to share their experiences and wisdom with other teachers. This is not "a government programme," but the kind of enlightening of best practices that your public platform affords you.

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Congressman Sonny outside the Capitol building in Washington DC PHOTO: JOE MARQUETTE

A high-contrast, black and white photograph. In the center, a man stands wearing a dark, hooded garment that covers his head and shoulders. He is shirtless underneath, revealing a hairy chest. His arms are raised, with his hands clenched into fists. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. In front of him, on the ground, lies another person, their face partially visible and looking upwards. The person on the ground appears to be holding a bottle or a similar object. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The entire image has a grainy, high-contrast aesthetic, with deep blacks and bright whites, giving it a stark, dramatic, and somewhat unsettling appearance.

I got you babe . . . Sonny & Cher

PHOTOGRAPH: CAMERIQUE

Palm Springs. Ignoring Cher's reported comment that "politicians are one step below used car salesman," Sonny was re-elected in 1996, and was rumoured to be planning to run for office again in 1998.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Whitaker, and four children.

Adam Sweeting

Sonny (Salvatore) Bono, singer, politician, born February 16, 1935; died January 5, 1998

Nike Solvey

David Bairstow, cricketer, born September 1, 1951; died January 5, 1996

SPENCER, Jess Mary, artist and educator, died of cancer on Sunday, 4th January at her home, 1000 1/2th Avenue, after a long illness. She was 67 years old. She was born in 1923 in England and came to Canada in 1947. She was married to John Spencer, who died in 1968. She was a member of the Vancouver Art Society and the Vancouver Art Council. She was a teacher at the Vancouver Art Society and the Vancouver Art Council. She was a member of the Vancouver Art Society and the Vancouver Art Council. She was a teacher at the Vancouver Art Society and the Vancouver Art Council.

Analysis Schengen Europe



George Monbiot:
Why suburbia is sprawling
9

Losers in the game without frontiers

When internal borders were swept away across Europe, Britain warned of the risks. Now drugs, crime and illegal immigrants seem to be proving us right. **Martin Walker** and **Alan Travis** ask whether the dream can survive

THE national border posts are being dusted down again within "frontier-free Europe", as one of the EU's most liberal experiments faces its sharpest test. Today in Brussels, officials of the countries which signed the 1985 Schengen agreement to scrap their internal border controls are meeting. They seek to preserve what they can of open Europe as thousands of Kurds arrive from Turkey and Iraq. Then tomorrow, Europe's police chiefs will gather in Rome, after appeals from the German government to Italy and other EU nations to strengthen their border controls to keep out the unwanted refugees.

For once within "Fortress Europe", they would be free to move around the other Schengen nations. France this week sent police reinforcements to its Italian border to prevent Kurds from entering. Germany demanded road checkpoints in Italy and threatened to strengthen its Italian frontier. Wide parts of Italy's 3,000 miles of coastline, as well as much of Greece's, have proved effectively unpoliceable. Can the Schengen dream now survive? And has the UK been proved right in refusing to join?

The current crisis of Europe's open borders rein-

NON EU

forces what the UK argued all along: that open EU frontiers were fine for law-abiding EU citizens; but what about the others?

Successive London governments argued not solely from reflexive Euro-scepticism against Schengen, which 13 EU states have now agreed. The British argument has been strictly legalistic.

The key phrase was that "internal borders may be crossed at any point without any checks on persons being carried out" (4). But then comes the problem of interpretation. After Schengen was negotiated, the Single European Act of 1987 defined "the free movement of people" as one of the four main elements of the internal market as laid down by Article 8a of the EEC Treaty.

Both the EU Commission and the majority of EU states which signed the Schengen agreement said they understood Article 8a to apply to everyone, EU citizens and third-country nationals alike. Britain insisted that the free

movement of people "according to Treaty provisions" applied to EU nationals only. Therefore non-EU citizens could still be checked, and therefore border controls could be maintained.

Europe's century of wars and revolutions had led everywhere to the erection of border controls. It was to end that grim chapter of history that the Treaty on European Union formally declared that the Union must be "an area of freedom, security and justice, in which the free movement of persons is assured" (2). The initiative, as usual, came from the Paris-Bonn axis. In 1984 Germany's Chancellor Kohl and France's President Mitterrand signed an agreement to reduce their mutual border controls, and Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands swiftly signed on. At Schengen in Luxembourg, on June 14 the following year, they all signed an agreement for the step-by-step elimination of their frontier controls.

But the Schengen agreement had two parts, and the second one provided for some dramatic "compensatory measures" to guarantee that non-Schengen borders would be closely policed. In the case of Germany's border with Poland, that means more than 100 infra-red alarms, 308 dog teams, patrol boats, helicopters and border guards.

Schengen also sharply extended trans-national police powers. Members grant each others' police forces, for instance, the right of pursuit and arrest across frontiers.

Yet the idealism of Schengen coincided with the end of the cold war, which opened what had been a relatively sealed border with central and eastern Europe. It led to a consequent surge in drug trafficking, organised crime and refugee movements. They came at first from Poland and Hungary, but by 1992 the war in former Yugoslavia brought waves of refugees.

BETWEEN 1985 and 1994, more than 3.4 million asylum applications were received by the 15 EU member states. In the peak month of July 1992, asylum applications were running at 3,000 a day. Compared with other parts of the world, Europe was not being "swamped", but politicians felt the need to claim otherwise. Italy, for instance, changed its laws to expedite deportation of illegal immigrants, after a Northern League senator declared in a debate that they should depart on military planes lest they rape the stewardesses of Alitalia.

Under pressure from its Front National, the last French government delayed implementing the Schengen provisions and proposed a draconian new law which

would require any employer of illegal immigrants to pay for their deportation, with a fine on top. Liberal Holland cited the need for solidarity with Schengen to tighten its own immigration laws, to prevent almost all except relatives and asylum-seekers.

And yet the Schengen deal survived the exodus from Yugoslavia and later that from Albania. It survived the spreading influence of the Russian mafia in organised crime, and even survived the anti-drugs policy of French President Jacques Chirac, who insists on regular checks of the northern borders to stop the importation of cannabis from Holland.

But it may not survive the current crisis over the Kurds. The Bosnians had the good fortune to "look" like Europeans, and to be fleeing a well-publicised war at a time when Germany in particular was welcoming (and booming). Today Germany faces double-digit unemployment, a tricky election year, and suspicions that many Kurds are economic refugees.

There are three other factors which make this refugee crisis different. First, Italy only joined the Schengen group last year, and its liberal asylum rules (and open coastline) have evidently shaken its partners' confidence.

Second, although the Kurdish refugees from Iraq still win sympathy, the Kurds of Turkey have run into a sepa-

rate political crisis, after the brusque rebuff of Turkish hopes of eventual EU membership at last month's Luxembourg summit.

Third, and most telling, the EU Commission is refusing to take a lead in defence of an agreement which embodied some of the better hopes of Europe's ultimate *Jeu Sans Frontières*.

"Schengen is about free circulation within the Union," a Commission spokeswoman insisted yesterday as the frontier barriers went up around Italy. "It is not about an immigration policy, nor about asylum. These are matters for the individual member states."

British politicians are greeting these developments with something of a wry smile. Margaret Thatcher's decision to insist that Britain kept the right to keep its own border controls — reaffirmed by Tony Blair in the Amsterdam Treaty last summer — might appear to have been vindicated. The sight of Dutch and French police carrying out their own spot checks to deter drug tourists suggests to British MPs at least that if you try to abolish borders between countries you soon need ways to reinvent them.

But that is to misunderstand the true nature of the Schengen regime. When Margaret Thatcher first insisted that Britain would not take

part, she was careful not to knock the whole idea. What she liked about Schengen was that it was a two-faced beast.

ON THE one hand, Schengen allowed hassle-free travel between EU countries whose borders were no longer enforceable anyway. On the other, it started to create a joint European internal security operation, directed against organised crime, drug and people traffickers and illegal migrants. Britain's own immigration service has had to consider such an approach in the face of financial pressures which mean it can no longer afford to maintain uni-

versal passport checks at airports and ports.

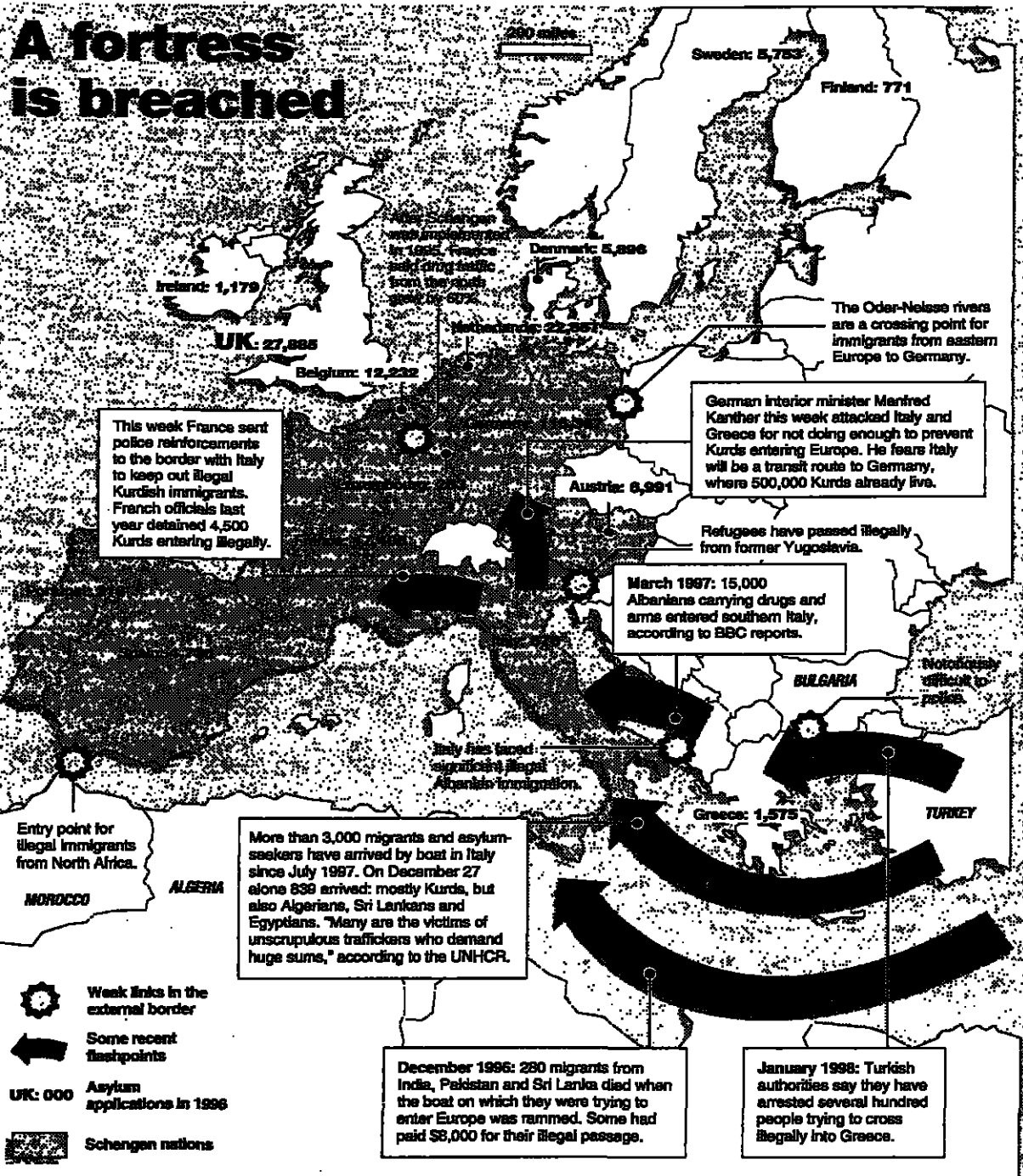
Britain's own claim to have enforceable borders, as an island, is increasingly out of date. For many the border with France and Belgium has moved from Dover and Folkestone to the Eurostar terminal at Waterloo. For most the bor-

der is Heathrow Airport and not Britain's coastline.

In fact, the UK's immigration, police and security services are increasingly turning to Schengen-style intelligence operations to combat illegal migrant traffickers. The traditional passport check is no longer the key. This does not mean that Britain will be dropping its border controls: in the election, Labour argued that it would retain them, because the alternative was intrusive systems of "internal controls" such as compulsory ID cards. But it does mean the Schengen-led process of international security cooperation — with its momentum towards a European police force — will not be leaving Britain on the sidelines. The Home Office confirmed yesterday that this was the one part of Schengen that Tony Blair negotiated the right to opt into at Amsterdam in June.

Sources: (1) Schengen Implementation Agreement, Article 21; (2) Amsterdam Treaty, Article 61; (3) Immigration Service Ports Comprehensive Study Interim Report, 26/9/97. Graphics sources: BBC News; Reuters; Migration News; UNHCR. Photographs: Steve Willers; Finbarr Sheehy. Research: Matt Keating; Laura Peak. Martin Walker is the Guardian's European editor. Alan Travis is the home affairs editor.

A fortress is breached



Your travel guide to Schengen Europe

The Schengen agreement is named after the Luxembourg town where it was signed in 1985. These nations are within the agreement: Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. Italy and Austria keep full border controls until April. Greece decides on entry later this year. Denmark, Sweden and Finland gain full entry next year.

How to get in

At external Schengen borders EU nationals have separate entry channels and do not need a passport if they have a European ID card. Non-EU nationals must show passport and visa.

What embassies do

Schengen-zone embassies implement rules. If one Schengen country does not have a diplomatic mission in another, a third member's embassy may issue visas.

The police's new role

Police and criminal-justice authorities cooperate much more closely. There are agreements on pursuing suspects across borders: eg German police may chase suspects for up to 10km into Holland.

Swapping security information

The Schengen Information System (SIS) is a database of descriptions of people and objects wanted or missing in each Schengen country. Police, customs officers and access it at any time.

Making extradition easier

Extradition rules have been made simpler. Also, people convicted in one country can serve sentences in another.

Links over drugs

Each Schengen country can pursue its own drugs policies but must consider how they may affect the others. There is increasing cooperation to limit drug smuggling. Schengen countries send liaison officers to each others' embassies.

What documents you need

You need proof of identity to travel to Schengen Europe. Nationals from within the zone, plus other EU nationals, need a passport or European ID card. Others may also need a visa or residence permit.

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Housing shake-up on way

Sales process among slowest in the world

Rupert Jones

RADICAL changes to the house-buying process are being considered by the Government in the wake of a survey showing that it takes longer to buy a property in England and Wales than almost anywhere else in the world.

Ideas being looked at for tackling delays include sellers having to put together an information pack for prospective buyers, which could include the title deeds, basic property information and local authority searches.

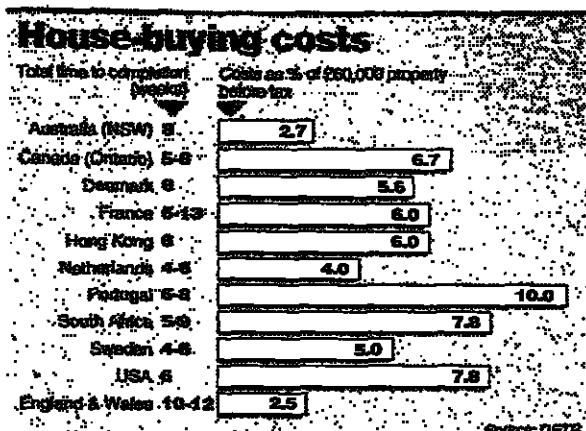
The Government said yesterday it might look also at

switching responsibility for the survey from the buyer to the seller by having this included in the pack.

The study found that the average time taken to agree terms and complete the deal in England and Wales was 10-12 weeks. This was longer than any other country surveyed except France (six to 10 weeks), Sweden and the Netherlands came top, with averages of four to six weeks.

Britain worked out cheapest of all 11 countries surveyed, however, when the study turned to costs associated with moving.

The findings are the first to emerge from a research project ordered by the Labour government last September in



response to concerns about gasping and other pitfalls of buying a home.

Gasping, where a vendor accepts an offer but then pulls out after receiving a higher one, was rife at the

height of the 1980s property boom and has returned in some areas such as London. It is almost unheard of abroad because of a difference in the way contracts are compiled.

The international study was a pilot project involving 100 property transactions. This ended in November and now will be followed by the main study, which will look at 1,200 property transactions in England and Wales, plus a sample in Scotland.

Buyers and sellers will be interviewed about their experiences and will keep a diary to record progress made. The results of this study are due to be presented next autumn.

Housing minister Hilary Armstrong said she and her team were "committed to identifying the root causes of delay in the home-buying process, and ways of addressing these and other problems which cause home buyers and sellers so much frustration and stress".

Getting more information on the table at the start of the process was seen as a key to tackling delays.

The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions said it was particularly interested in how the compulsory seller's information pack could be made a reality.

The Council of Mortgage Lenders said the 10- to 12-week period cited "sounds pessimistic". It suggested "chains", where each party is dependent on others, might cause some delays.

The Law Society said it had feared for some time the idea of seller's information packs, but added that government and industry support would be needed to achieve this "culture change".

Notebook

So far, so bad for Herr Kohl



Edited by Mark Milner

WITH 1998 barely a week old, Germany's Chancellor Kohl must be praying that things can only get better. He has reason. This year is meant to see Mr Kohl crown his political career by setting the seal on the European single currency and then striding on to win a record fifth term of office. So far, so bad.

Yesterday, one of Germany's leading economic think tanks said Germany had overshot the budget deficit level needed to qualify for monetary union. The margin was hardly negligible. Qualification has been set at 3 per cent of gross domestic product in 1997. In Germany, it was 3.5 per cent, according to the German Economics Institute in Berlin.

The grim news was compounded by indications that unemployment leapt by almost 200,000 to 4.5 million last month and by warnings that the debt queues will lengthen again this year.

Euro-sceptics have already lodged a complaint with the country's supreme court in an attempt to save the German mark and wreck the euro and, while few observers give them much chance of success in their court action, yesterday's figures will boost their case and could also increase the mass anxiety about the euro prevalent in Germany. They will certainly increase the intensity of the political in-fighting in the run-up to the election.

Mr Kohl is not the only one who needs to be worried. If Germany is deemed to have missed the strict limit but is allowed to qualify anyway, attempts to keep out other fiscal miscreants will be weakened. That would dent the euro's credibility — a situation which might need to be rectified by the European Central Bank running a tighter than necessary monetary policy.

For the German Chancellor there would inevitably be a knock-on effect from the humiliation of Germany's having to be allowed into monetary union on a grace-and-favour basis. His political opponents would see to that.

This year may yet still prove an annus mirabilis for Europe's leader, politician. He has ignored economics in the past, on German monetary union for example, and got away with it. This time round, the task is looking trickier by the day.

Eyeing Burton

THE success or otherwise of Top Shop in luring young women to splash out on its latest fashions is not normally of much interest to those responsible for setting Britain's interest rates.

But the Monetary Policy committee meets tomorrow and will have to make a difficult judgment about whether the economy has already begun to cool down. So there will be more than usual scrutiny of yesterday's sales figures from Burton — the country's second-largest clothes retailer through Top Shop, other high street stores such as Evans and Dorothy Perkins, and the soon-to-be merged Debenhams. Especially as the group is the first retailer to report its Christmas trading experience.

Unfortunately, Burton's sales figures are inconclusive — not as bad as many had feared, nor as good as some had hoped.

Even the trend is blurred by a particularly bad November, which means that December's recovery could be read either as a bounce back or as part of a continued reduction in the rate of growth since the summer.

There will be a much clearer picture by the end of next week, when Boots, Dixons, Sainsbury and Argos will have reported their sales experience. In the meantime, it looks as though consumer spending has been slowing steadily since the summer, but is still significantly ahead of the previous year.

Flying high

UNLIKE Chancellor Kohl, Airbus Industrie has entered 1998 flying high. The aircraft maker is slugging it out toe-to-toe with the US's Boeing in the market for wide-bodied jets. Business hit record levels last year. Airbus could well have grabbed more than half the market in 1997. Though there are caveats, last year's figures were boosted by a very large order from USAir — its hopes of consistently achieving a 50 per cent market share are looking realistic.

That is no mean achievement. Boeing is a formidable rival. The intensity of the competition can be judged by the fate of McDonnell Douglas, which was swallowed by Boeing last year.

But there is little room for complacency as Airbus itself has realised. Its unwieldy structure — the organisation is an economic partnership involving Daimler-Benz Aerospace, Aerospatiale, British Aerospace and Spain's CASA — is badly in need of an overhaul.

Plans to turn Airbus into a conventional corporate entity, which would allow it greater freedom to raise cash, cut costs and speed up the decision-making process, are being drawn up. There is bound to be turbulence — not least when, rather than if, Airbus in its new look corporate guise starts shifting production from existing plants to lower cost sites.

The exercise is time critical. Most of the Airbus partners are deeply involved in the defence industry which itself is badly in need of rationalisation and restructuring. The sooner Airbus can take wing on its own the easier it will be for the big players to start making progress in even more difficult areas.

Tesco answers meat price beef with an inquiry

Roger Cowe

TESCO chief executive Terry Leahy launched an investigation yesterday into why nobody in Britain seems to be making any money out of meat.

Hitting back at farmers, who have accused the country's leading supermarket chain of profiteering at their expense, he told the annual Oxford Farming Conference that Tesco's red-meat sales were profit-free.

"We make little or nothing on selling meat. I looked at some recent figures and, after deducting our costs from the small gross margin, we are lucky to break even," he said.

Safeway confirmed the poor bottom line for topside and legs of lamb but Tesco's rival, Sainsbury, said it was still making profit on meat, although less than it used to.

Mr Leahy was responding to attacks from farmers which culminated in a truck-load of Tesco beefburgers, along with beef being tipped into the sea at Holyhead before Christmas. British farmers claimed the cheaper Irish beef set into their market share.

The Tesco spokesman said that farmers were mistaken in contrasting their livestock prices with the cost of meat in the supermarket. Between the two ends of the supply chain are abattoirs and meat packers.

The BSE scare also has affected prices. New regulations on offal and spinal cord mean that it costs money to

dispose of parts of the carcass which previously have been sold.

"No one seems to be making any money. You say you don't. Our suppliers say they don't. We certainly don't," Mr Leahy told the farmers.

"The price crisis of beef is clearly a crisis for us all — we are just more fortunate than the single-enterprise beef farmer as we can draw on profits from elsewhere."

He announced that a top firm of economists had been engaged to track down the missing profits. London Economics, a firm founded by Professor John Kay and former Treasury adviser Bill Robinson, has been commissioned to investigate how the cost of beef and lamb builds up from farm to supermarket.

A Tesco spokesman said the terms of reference would be set over the next three weeks and a report produced by the summer. The methodology and conclusions will be shared with the National Farmers Union, although he stressed that this would remain a Tesco investigation.

Whatever the conclusion, the consequence of non-existent profits in the industry ought to be higher prices for red meat. But the supermarket spokesman said last night that this was unlikely.

"It's quite competitive, very price-sensitive and a significant item in the shopping basket," he said. "Customers shouldn't be put off by the price. We don't want to drive them to other products."

Music piracy's too rife not to mention

Simon Beavis
Media Business Editor

MUSIC business executives urged the Government to lead a Europe-wide crackdown on piracy and breaches of intellectual property rights after it emerged that Culture Secretary Chris Smith is to set up a committee of experts to advise on the industry.

News that the committee is to be launched next week gave rise to furious speculation over who would be appointed to this latest New Labour policy task force. There were unconfirmed rumours that Mick Huck-



nail, the millionaire lead singer of Simply Red and New Labour supporter, who recently owned up to vague political ambitions, could be one of up to about a dozen people chosen from across the industry.

The committee would cement the already strong ties between the Blair administration and an industry which has often complained of political neglect, in spite of its huge success.

Mr Smith's ambit already includes a creative industries taskforce — established by the Prime Minister shortly after his election victory — and a film policy committee.

Mr Smith has emphasised that the Government puts a high priority on the industry, which employs more than 115,000 in the UK and earns \$4 billion a year. In a speech to the US music in-



Labour supporter Mick Hucknall of Simply Red, who could join the Government's music policy committee, performs at Wembley during the Euro 96 final. PHOTOGRAPH: REUTERS

dustry in October he promised to tackle issues like intellectual property rights.

But the industry has reached something of a plateau after 10 years of spectacular growth and there is growing concern about rampant piracy, with one in three CDs sold worldwide a pirated disc.

Rupert Perry, chief executive officer of EMI

Europe, welcomed the news of the committee and urged the Government to use its six-month presidency of the European Union to take the lead on intellectual property legislation.

He said all European governments should ratify the World Intellectual Property Organisation treaties, but Britain needed to take particular action. "There is no other European country

that generates the same value of earnings from intellectual property as this country," he said.

John Deacon, director general of British Phonographic Industries, said the Government should also take action to ensure copyright was as strictly enforced in the digital age, when music would routinely be transmitted on the Internet.

Whitbread to shut breweries

Julia Finch

WHITBREAD is set to close two of its five breweries in an attempt to cut costs and reduce overcapacity, according to industry sources. The two scheduled to shut are believed to be the Flowers in Cheltenham and the Castle Eden operation in County Durham.

Last night, a spokesman for the company, which is the UK's third biggest brewer — with brands including Heineken, Boddingtons and Stella Artois, refused to comment on rumours about proposed closures.

But if they go ahead they would be just the latest casualties of the decline in beer sales which has led to a series of shutdowns in the last five years and prompted the big beer companies to expand into other leisure businesses, like restaurants and hotels.

The big four have closed 10 breweries since 1993 and an additional four will be winding up operations before the millennium — not including any Whitbread closures. There are some 300 staff based at the two Whitbread breweries under threat, although less than half are involved in production. The company's other breweries are located at Sainsbury in Lancashire, Major in Gwent and Manchester.

Only two months ago, Bass, the country's second biggest brewer after Scottish & Newcastle, announced it was halt-

ing production at its Sheffield and Cardiff breweries with the loss of some 180 jobs. Those closures were the result of President of the Board of Trade Margaret Beckett's decision last summer to block Bass's proposed takeover of rival Carlsberg-Tetley.

In the wake of that decision, Carlsberg announced it was shutting down operations at its Wrexham, Alton and Burton breweries. Bass, however, has since acquired the Burton facility, which is located alongside its own main brewing centre.

Less than 20 years ago, annual beer consumption in Britain was more than 42 million barrels, but changing lifestyles, less leisure time spent in pubs and an increase in drinking at home has led to declining sales and last year only 35 million barrels were consumed.

Underlining the big brewers' diversification into other interests, Bass yesterday announced it was buying four more hotels in Australia for \$46 million. The company, which is now the world's biggest hotel operator, will convert the hotels to its Holiday Inn brand.

At the same time, the company revealed it was buying Browns, a chain of seven up-market UK restaurants for £26 million. Bass has failed to expand in the restaurant business as successfully as Whitbread, which now owns a wide portfolio of restaurant chains.

Europe grabs the attention of UK corporate raiders

Mark Milner
Deputy Financial Editor

UK COMPANIES spent a record amount on acquisitions in continental Europe last year, but purchases in the US fell sharply, according to figures published yesterday.

UK companies spent \$8.7 billion last year in more than 250 deals, from Amersham International's \$1.5 billion bid for Norway's Nycomed to the US fell sharply, according to figures published yesterday.

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Biggest European investment in the UK was Lafarge's \$1.9 billion acquisition of building materials group Redland which boosted the value of deals to \$7.1 billion, up from \$4.8 billion in 1996.

US firms spent \$14.5 billion on 228 deals in the UK, led by Merrill Lynch's \$3.1 billion purchase of Mercury Asset Management. UK purchases in the US of \$9.2 billion (\$5.6 billion) were down about \$10 billion on 1996 (excluding BT's unsuccessful bid for MCI).

Target Europe

Top 10 deals in the continent in 1997

Target	% stake in company	Bidder (UK)	Value £m
Nycomed (100%) (Norway)		Amersham International	1,515
Telefonos de Espana (2%) (Spain)		BT	280
Alliance Santé de Luxembourg (100%) (Luxembourg)		Unilever	278
Libertel (27%) (Netherlands)		Vodafone	257
SHRM (93%) (France)		Compass Group	227
Union Financière de France-Banque (99%) (France)		Commerzbank Union	204
Rizla International (100%) (Netherlands)		Imperial Tobacco Group	185
Herbert Karl Hainemann (100%) (Germany)		Boots Company	175
Pollux Meter Group (100%) (France)		BT	164
Solvay (73%) (France)		Commerzbank Union	140

* Standco, a subsidiary of British

Source: Acquisitions Monthly

Airbus beats off Boeing by landing most jet orders

David Gow
Industrial Editor

AIRBUS, the European four-nation plane-maker, yesterday secured a notable victory over arch-rival Boeing by winning more than half of the orders for jet airliners last year.

Claiming it was on course to capture a consistent 50 per cent of the market soon, Toulouse-based Airbus said it had won orders for 671 aircraft. Its US competitor disclosed it had won orders for 560.

This gave Airbus \$4.5 per cent of the market, compared with 45.5 per cent for Seattle-based Boeing, which has suffered production bottlenecks.

This is the first time since 1994 and only the second time in its 35-year history that Airbus, in which British Aerospace has a 30 per cent stake, outperformed its American

rival. It now plans to raise output by 30 per cent and deliver 235 aircraft this year, compared with 182 last year, a 50 per cent rise on 1996 levels.

The news is certain to raise the political stakes between the US and Europe. President Clinton and his predecessors have accused Airbus of using huge government subsidies to undercut its US rival. Boeing last year boosted its output by buying McDonnell Douglas.

"It's going to put very severe pressure on aircraft prices because Boeing is not going to want Airbus to continue to have that kind of market share," said Nick Cunningham, an analyst at Salomon Smith Barney.

Jean Pierson, Airbus managing director, disclosed that the 671 orders were worth \$44.2 billion (\$27 billion), a record. Firm orders were for 460, with the backlog standing at a record 1,008 worth \$72 billion.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.49	France 0.67	Italy 2.89	Singapore 2.78
Austria 20.14	Germany 2.89	Malta 0.83	South Africa 7.81
Belgium 59.73	Greece 400.13	Netherlands 3.2512	Spain 243.14
Canada 2.25	Hong Kong 12.25	New Zealand 2.78	Sweden 12.85
Cyprus 0.85	India 54.55	Norway 1.84	Switzerland 2.36
Denmark 11.09	Ireland 1.429	Portugal 204.84	Turkey 32.190
Finland 8.85	Israel 5.82	Saudi Arabia 6.00	USA 1.5905

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

Wigan wade in to land their Sailor

Storm warning...Sailor is 6ft 5in and 16 stone **NEAL SIMPSON**

their Yorkshire Cup final at Halifax last month. Four players were sent off for fighting, three others were sin-binned and two women spectators were also involved in a skirmish.



ham race in March. Dardjini is 4-1 favourite, followed by 9-2 Boardroom Shuffle, 7-1 Hill Society and 8-1 Crack On, Direct Line and Edelweis Du Moulin.

[illegible]

Football

Coca-Cola Cup, quarter-final: Reading 0, Middlesbrough 1

Hignett strikes to give Boro victory in the last minute

Martin Thorpe

CRAIG HIGNETT scored in the 86th minute last night to break the deadlock and deny Reading, who had famously won at Leeds in the semi-finals of this competition for the first time in their history.

It was tough on Reading, who were missing four key defenders with injury yet gave a good account of themselves against the First Division leaders.

Although beaten 4-0 at the Riverside Stadium just over three weeks ago, they had gone unbeaten in the five league games played either side of the Middlesbrough defeat.

The rediscovery of some sort of form had followed a sticky start to the season for Reading under a new manager, Terry Bullivant, and with a bevy of close-season signings who have taken time to bed in.

For Middlesbrough too the summer was a time to take stock after a nightmare sea-

son in which they lost in the finals not only of this competition but also in the FA Cup, as well as being controversially relegated from the Premiership.

Although Emerson is still causing trouble much else has changed at Middlesbrough this season. They too have recovered from a poor start and now look odds-on for a swift return to the top flight.

Last night they were soon reminded of some of the embarrassments of last season when Reading twice went close to taking the lead in the opening 20 minutes.

On the quarter hour James Lambert swung in a corner from the left which was met with a firm header by the Reading defender Gareth Davies. The ball ricocheted goalwards off his team-mate Trevor Morley and was cleared off the line by Vladimir Klenov.

Five minutes later the home side went close again when Martin Williams broke down the right and swept in a cross which Morley directed towards goal, a deceptively lazy swing of his boot produc-

ing a stinging shot that Mark Schwarzer in the Boro goal could only parry upwards and only inches over the bar.

Boro hit back almost immediately when they struck on the break. Robbie Mustoe feeding Beck who in turn set up Craig Hignett with only the goalkeeper to beat. However Nicky Hammond was brave and agile enough to block the shot and put it wide for a corner.

Just before the break Reading lost their right winger Williams with what looked like a self-inflicted injury after he had tackled Boro's Andy Townsend, but they came out for the second half with renewed vigour. On 62 minutes Lambert cut in from the left and pushed the ball sideways into the path of striker Carl Asaba, whose first-time shot produced a fine save from Schwarzer.

Five minutes later Reading went close again. This time Steve Swales crossed to Morley who was unmarked in front of goal but somehow managed to head over the bar.

Boro's best chance immediately after the break had fallen to Beck, who went through on goal only to shoot wastefully wide. On 87 minutes the visitors were even closer when Hignett chipped a curling shot from the left corner of the penalty area which struck the angle of crossbar and post.

Only two minutes were left when Townsend's free kick was headed on by Merson for Hignett to drive in the winner.

Reading (4-4-2): Hammond; Bost, Swales, Lambert, Searle; Davies, Parkinson, Hodges, Asaba; Morley, Williams.
Middlesbrough (4-4-2): Schwarzer; Wilson, Worrall, Smith, England; Hignett, Townsend, Beck; Merson, Macdonald.
Referee: G. Gair (Bristol).

Emerson played out at Boro

EMERSON has played his last game for Middlesbrough, sources at the club privately admitted yesterday, writes Michael Walker. There has been no official statement but the wayward Brazilian may join Tenerife this week if agreement can be reached over Boro's £4 million valuation.

Tenerife, whose president Geovier Bereszy met the First Division club's chief executive Keith Lamb for negotia-

tions at the Riverside stadium on Monday, have so far not met the asking price, and Boro are anxious to recoup the £4 million they paid for the midfielder in the summer of 1996.

Emerson was fined, dropped and banned from training by his manager Bryan Robson after returning late - not for the first time - from a Christmas break in Brazil.

BBC and ITV agree to take turns on World Cup games

ENGLAND's and Scotland's opening World Cup matches in France this summer will be screened live by the BBC. This is part of a "complementary schedule" announced yesterday in which the BBC and ITV have agreed not to duplicate coverage of the home countries' group matches after the tournament's opening game. All 64 cup games will be available on terrestrial television.

The BBC will show the opening ceremony, followed by Scotland against Brazil on June 10 and England's match with Tunisia five days later. ITV too will broadcast the Scotland-Brazil match live in the company's Scottish regions.

ITV will screen the home nations' second group matches, then the final group matches and the final. BBC, ITV will have first

pick of the second-round games, and the BBC of the quarter-finals and semi-finals.

There will be no perimeter fences at the 10 stadiums to be used in the finals, the French organisers said yesterday. Two cities, St Etienne and Lens, had been agreed not to duplicate coverage of the home countries' group matches after the tournament's opening game. All 64 cup games will be available on terrestrial television.

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grounds. "Prisoners and wild animals should be behind bars, not in the stadium. They are not animals," he said.

Franz Beckenbauer believes Germany and England should co-host the 2006 World Cup. The former German national captain and coach said he would back any such move but he anticipated opposition from Fifa.

Speaking at the Football Association's annual conference in London, where both countries have big stands, he pointed out the risk that vying with each other might split the European vote, making way for South Africa to get the job.

Vilcos survived break-point against him in the first game



Winds of fortune... Rusdski, who said two practice sessions a day during December helped polish his game, steadies himself to receive serve yesterday

Rusdski keeps The Grin intact

Richard Jago in Doha sees Britain's No. 1 overcome the wind, cold and Ramadan

GREG RUSEDISKI notched up several notable firsts to beat the Spaniard Juan Alberto Vilcoas 6-4, 6-4 and reach the second round of the Qatar Open here yesterday.

It was his first match since a clutch of awards had made him Britain's most famous player since Fred Perry, his first match as top seed in a mainstream tournament, and his first of the 1998 Tour.

It was as well that The Grin was intact. Ramadan not only delayed play until night-time but brought a driver shortage as Rusdski was leaving the hotel, because the evening is when Muslims now have to take their breakfast.

A non-Muslim driver was found to take him to the stadium, but the less conspicuous bits of his game, such as his volleys and his backhand, were not as good as his forehand.

John Newcombe once claimed mischievously that Bjorn Borg was so good because he never stopped oiling his parts. Rusdski might agree that two practice sessions a day during December had helped polish the less conspicuous bits of his game.

And immediately began to dig in from the baseline. The Russian walked more coolly than ever, and a multi-layered Tony Pickard, Rusdski's coach, huddled down as if there was an outstanding Spanish lob had forced him back again he was quickly in position to renew the attack. A backhand slice down the line won the point, whereas Vilcoas delivered a double fault to drop serve.

Rusdski served out for the set and appeared to be cruising when he broke early in the second set, only for Vilcoas

to fight back. By now the press had left for the shelter of their tent and only a sprinkling of fans still thought that seeing a live duel in the elements was better than watching televised action in the warmth.

Rusdski again broke in the ninth game and served out efficiently. Afterwards he could not remember when he last played in conditions as cold, nor would he recall the name of the castle in Kent which he hired for four days of Christmas celebrations. If that helped him summon the equanimity he showed yesterday, it may have been cheap at a five-figure price.

Tomorrow Rusdski plays the Moroccan Karim Alami, a player he knows well because he won the doubles at junior Wimbledon with him.

Today the British focus will switch to Tim Henman, who meets Guillaume Raoux in the second round. If he beats the Frenchman, as he has in both their previous meetings, he may have a difficult meeting with Petr Korda, but progress after that might be less difficult after yesterday's defeat of the No. 2 seed Sergi Bruguera.

The Spaniard was brought down 6-4, 6-2 by his compatriot Carlos Costa and by the chill and wind which Rusdski had so obdurately resisted.

Tomorrow Rusdski plays

France capitalise as Pierce enjoys victory feeling

THE world No. 7 Mary Pierce began her build-up to the Australian Open with a three-set victory over Anke Huber as the No. 2 seeds France beat Germany 3-0 in the Hopman Cup in Perth yesterday. Cedric Pioline, the former Wimbledon and US Open finalist, clinched the win when he beat Tommy Haas 6-4, 6-4.

Pierce, the former Australian Open champion, broke from the back in the first set, won the first two games and served out with a three-set victory over Anke Huber as the No. 2 seeds France beat Germany 3-0 in the Hopman Cup in Perth yesterday.

Slovakia later whitewashed Sweden to keep alive their hopes of qualifying for Saturday's final. Karina Habudova defeated Asa Carlsson and Karol Ku-

cera beat Thomas Enqvist to give them an unassailable 2-0 lead and they also won the mixed doubles.

Meanwhile, the former world No. 1 Andre Agassi, fighting his way back after a dreadful 1997, trailed Sergio Sargian 6-4, 8-9 in his opening match at the Australian Hardcourt Championship in Adelaide when rain stopped play.

Royle in line for return as Bradford City sack Kamara

Ian Ross and Peter White

BRADFORD CITY have sacked their manager Chris Kamara, who led them to the top of the First Division early in the season. City have won only four of their last 21 league and cup games.

The 40-year-old Kamara, who guided the Yorkshire club to promotion via the play-offs in 1996, was summoned to a meeting of the board of directors at Valley Parade yesterday afternoon.

The first-team coach Paul Jewell takes charge of the team until a new manager is appointed. The former Everton manager Joe Royle and Bradford's former player Stuart McCall, who is nearing the end of his career at Rangers, are favourites for the job.

Sheffield Wednesday's manager Ron Atkinson is ready to invest about £2 million in Poland's Pawel Wojtala. The centre-back, who plays for Hamburg, arrived in Yorkshire yesterday for a short trial period.

Coventry City are to offer Dion Dublin a new contract that will keep him at Highfield Road until the summer of 2002. Bryan Richardson, the chairman, has begun negotiations with him over a deal thought to be worth about £100,000 a week; it will extend the 26-year-old striker's current contract, due to expire in 18 months' time, by three years. Dublin has interested Middlesbrough, Crystal Palace and Leicester City among others.

Birmingham City have completed the £200,000 signing of Southampton's full-back Simon Charlton, 26.

'Big Brother' tactics' anger Stevenage

Ian Ross and Peter White

STEVENAGE BOROUGH were yesterday given permission to stage their fourth-round FA Cup tie against Newcastle at their Broadhall Way ground on January 25, a decision that may yet be challenged by United.

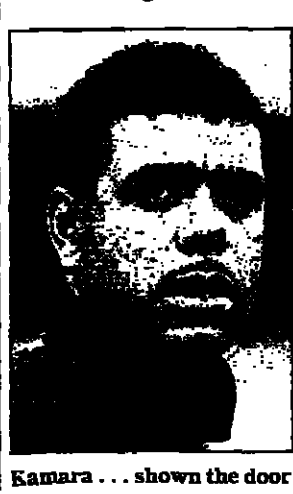
After learning that the Vauxhall Conference club would be allowed to increase the ground capacity only from 6,600 to 8,000 seats - 2,200 of them for the visitors - Newcastle's Russell Cushing telephoned the Stevenage chairman Victor Green to arrange a visit from United's safety officer.

"He told me they would then make a formal objection to the Football Association," said Green. "I would like the time to consider the move," he said. "I don't want to say anything else at this stage."

"It is an all-ticket match. People who do not have tickets will not be travelling down. Also it will be live on Sky so they can all see it on TV," he said. "It is not a problem, and they are making a big boo-ha. The basic reason is that they are dead scared of coming to play at Broadhall Way."

Stevenage will still enjoy a windfall of £250,000, including £150,000 in television fees from Sky alone.

Their manager Paul Fairclough and his players were prepared to play at Newcastle but Green told them: "If you want to play at St James' Park so badly, you'll have to earn a replay."



Kamara... shown the door

Results

Football
Coca-Cola Cup
Quarter-finals
Middlesbrough 1
Reading 0

NATIONAL LEAGUE
Third Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Fourth Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Fifth Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Sixth Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Seventh Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Eighth Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Ninth Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Tenth Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Eleventh Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Twelfth Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Thirteenth Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Fourteenth Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
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FOOTBALL
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Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
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Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Tenth Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Eleventh Division
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Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
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FOOTBALL
Thirteenth Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Fourteenth Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Fifteenth Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

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FOOTBALL
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Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Ninth Division
Sheff Wed 1
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FOOTBALL
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Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Fifteenth Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Sixteenth Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Seventeenth Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

FOOTBALL
Eighteenth Division
Sheff Wed 1
Cardiff 0

Sport in brief

Snooker

Alex Higgins withdrew from his first qualifying-round match in the Embassy World Championship in Blackpool yesterday because of ill health. The World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association said. The 48-year-old Irishman would have needed to come through eight preliminary rounds to earn another shot at the title he won in 1972 and 1982.

Chess

Anatoly Karpov regained the lead in the Fide world championship in Lausanne when his Indian challenger Vishy Anand spilt a promising position against the Caro-Kann Defence, writes Leonard Barde. Karpov exchanged into a pawn sacrifice and when he established a second passed pawn on the other flank Anand resigned at move 50. The Russian now leads 2½-1½ with two games left.

Basketball

The England coach Laszlo Nemeth is poised to take over as coach of Derby Storm in the Budweiser League while maintaining his position with the national team. The Department for Education and Employment has been asked to grant the Hungarian a work permit allowing him to hold both coaching roles until the end of the season. Derby lost their coach Steve Tucker for health reasons last week.

Team talk

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SportsGuardian

Arsenal breach West Ham fortress



All wrapped up... Ray Parlour congratulates the Arsenal striker Ian Wright on opening the scoring after West Ham's John Hartson had missed a penalty. PHOTOGRAPH: SHAWN BOTTERILL

Coca-Cola Cup, quarter-final: West Ham United 1, Arsenal 2

Wright fires the Gunners

Bad boy is back with a bang in a rare home defeat for Hammers. David Lacey reports

ARSENAL took a belated interest in the Coca-Cola Cup last night and stunned Upton Park with two pieces of sharp opportunism before West Ham United could manage a reply.

After John Hartson, a former Arsenal striker, had missed a penalty, Ian Wright and Marc Overmars scored in each half. Then Samuel Abou came off West Ham's bench to meet a long pass from Keith Rowland, another substitute, and give the home side a glimmer of hope. But Arsenal survived a late siege.

Last night Arsenal could no longer afford to treat the Coca-Cola Cup as an excuse to stretch the legs of their

reserves. Only Lee Dixon, of the regular first-team players, had appeared against Birmingham City in the third round but now, because of injury, he was the only face missing from the usual side.

For Arsenal, putting out a team close to full strength had become a matter of form—or in their case a lack of it. The Arsenal held to 0-0 by Port Vale in the FA Cup three days earlier, had borne scant resemblance to the Arsenal that had routed West Ham 4-0 at Highbury in September.

So with Wright back in his attack after a two-match ban, Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal manager, was looking for a revived performance which would also set his team back

on course in the Premiership. No simple task this against a West Ham team omnipotent at Upton Park this season and with 10 straight home wins behind them.

Certainly West Ham began like a side who did not expect to lose. Confidence flowed through their football from the outset even though the first chance of the game fell to Arsenal when Wright, allowed a free header when he met Dennis Bergkamp's centre at the far post, put the ball over the bar.

The moment was to prove portentous, yet as David Seaman blocked a shot from Frank Lampard at the near post, Martin Keown having been beaten for pace by the West Ham midfielder, Upton Park's mood remained sanguine. Two minutes past the quarter-hour, in fact, West Ham prepared to take the lead

their start had demanded. Paul Kitson, sent clear on the left by Eyal Berkovic, was brought down by Seaman, and Hartson prepared to punish his old team from the penalty spot.

Instead he let them off. Faced with a bank of barricading Arsenal support, Hartson's kick was untypically tentative and poorly aimed and Seaman saved it with little fuss.

Already the renewed partnership of Bergkamp and Wright had shown signs of recovering its autumn bloom. After 30 minutes a pass from the Dutchman found Wright outwitting Craig Forrest, the West Ham goalkeeper, but poorly placed to achieve a shot. Five minutes later, however, the combination bore fruit.

With the West Ham defence spreadeagled and Rio Ferdi-

nand unable to sweep the danger clear, Wright accepted a return pass from Bergkamp, sidestepped David Unsworth and beat Forrest despite the Canadian getting a hand to the shot.

West Ham were hardly out of the contest but they were beginning to look out of luck. As the first half ended, Lampard drove a 25-yard free-kick towards the near corner. Seaman, his reactions sluggish, stretched out a foot and managed to thrust the ball against the post from where it flew up and hit him on the forehead before bouncing clear.

A more familiar Seaman re-emerged at the start of the second half. An error by Gilles Grimandi, again uncertain as Dixon's replacement, allowed Berkovic to drive in a shot which the England goalkeeper tipped over the bar.

In next to no time the pat-

Property men do business over Seagulls



Paul Hayward

SURPRISE, surprise: the property developers who bought Brighton and Hove Albion's ground for £2.4 million three years ago have just sold it on for nearly £24 million. May 24 million seagulls dump on the wretched retail park now rising on the site of the Goldstone Ground—and the rest of football be warned.

An early candidate for business back of the year is surely the man who sold a prime location in Hove to Chartwell Development Properties for less than a third of its current value. Bill Archer, who still owns 49.9 per cent of the club, sold the Goldstone at a seemingly knockdown price without having the courtesy to build a replacement or even find a viable site. As Archer lives in Mellor near Blackburn and the team who were once best described as in exile in Gillingham (another brilliant Archer deal), the people of Sussex are left raging at offit.

be explaining why it granted planning permission on a site of enormous importance to a community whose football club had been performing in ever decreasing circles for nearly a hundred years.

Mention of Brighton's continuing troubles might tip some readers into an instant coma—especially as poor Doncaster appear to be in an even worse state. As their players (many, free transfers from non-league clubs) endure 8-0 defeats by such swaggering giants as Leyton Orient, Doncaster's owners grow ever more malevolent. Their latest wheeze is identity cards which will be confiscated from any fan who observes his or her democratic right to protest at the way the directors are wrecking their club.

Brighton have paid off their six highest wage-earners, are certain to lose more than £1 million this season and still have no approved site for a permanent return to Sussex. A short-term move to a (a run-down athletics track) will cost another fortune in redevelopment costs and has already met resistance from local residents. The club are changed but not cleansed. The new chairman Dick Knight is cursed with having to carry the baggage of the Archer regime and would probably rather share a boardroom with Dracula.

Dear old Sussex by the sea, where Brighton racecourse is stuck in the 1940s, the county cricket team are manfully propping up the leagues, and the women's tennis tournament, which Steve Graf always attended because people never bothered her when she was out shopping in the Lanes, has raised its skirts and fled. The same goes for Chartwell, which has invested £5 million to enable Sussex folk to buy more things they never knew they needed. In a sea of mud sailed by piratical diggers and workmen, a temple of consumption is being built where Brighton and Hove Albion were nearly consumed.

From the local council last week came a hilarious suggestion which illuminates the perversity of the whole charade. They thought it might be a good idea if Chartwell were to donate £1 million of its £10 million profit to the club to assist their return to Sussex next season (at Withdean Stadium, a proposed temporary home). This raised the intriguing possibility of the man who sold the ground being compensated for his own apparent incompetence.

In any case, another surprise—the request was turned down yesterday, and now the local authority really ought to

HOWEVER interminable they seem, these sagas appeal to the rubber-necking instinct. As football polarises towards a two-division professional set-up—a Serie A and Serie B, if you like—the vultures are circling when she was out shopping in the Lanes, has raised its skirts and fled. The same goes for Chartwell, which has invested £5 million to enable Sussex folk to buy more things they never knew they needed. In a sea of mud sailed by piratical diggers and workmen, a temple of consumption is being built where Brighton and Hove Albion were nearly consumed.

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France 98: the world of entertainment

Three tenors are first to enter the penalty aria

Jon Hensley in Paris

THE biggest-selling trio of classical music performers in history will not be putting any money on the outcome of next summer's World Cup.

Naturally they would love to see their national sides make it to the final, but Spain are in a very tricky group and Italy have not been in the best of form.

Plácido Domingo, José Carreras and Luciano Pavarotti, in Paris yesterday to announce "the most ambitious and spectacular concert we have ever staged" for France 98, revealed almost as much passion for football as for Puccini, whose soaring Nessun

Dorma they turned into one of the most unlikely hits of the decade.

"You're catching us on a black day," Pavarotti said. "My team, Juventus, lost this weekend. Plácido's team, Real Madrid, lost. And Jose's team, Barcelona, lost 4-3 after leading 10 minutes from the end. It was a disaster."

Asked whose brand of football their music most resembled, Domingo replied: "I would hope Brazil's. It's happy, it's harmonious, it's got rhythm."

The Three Tenors' France 98 concert will be on July 10, two days before the final, on a stage erected in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower. James Levine will conduct the Orchestre de



Scale models... Carreras, Pavarotti and Domingo yesterday. PHOTOGRAPH: MICHEL EULER

Paris in a new programme of arias, songs and medleys.

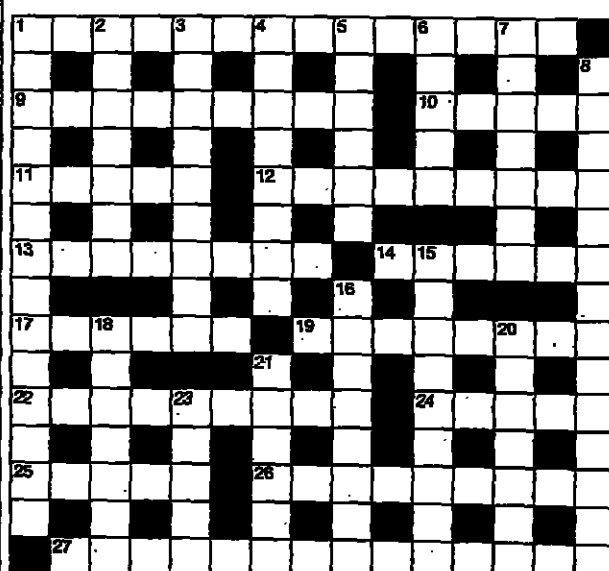
Tickets for the 9,000 VIP seats on the Champ de Mars will go on sale on Monday, and up to a million people are expected to crowd into the park to watch the event for free on giant video screens.

Fresh from playing at the King of Spain's 60th birthday in Madrid on Monday, the tenors—who followed up their first appearance in Rome at the 1990 World Cup with another in Los Angeles in 1994—said they were "awed but thrilled" to be asked to perform.

"Of course you get nervous, knowing you'll be watched by more than a billion people," said Domingo. "But it helps a lot that we're together. We know and admire and respect each other, and we support each other; we're a team."

Guardian Crossword No 21,165

Set by Taupi

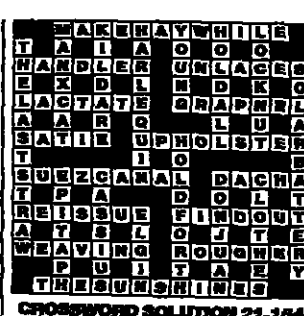


Across

- 1 What's not on fire if burnt—odd phenomenon (9,5)
- 2 Careless about information on fire without copy of it (8)
- 3 Visitor's supposed to be heard (5)
- 4 Part of a day to note (5)
- 5 Lagwear and shirt, say, for one in the diamond field (5-4)
- 6 Alternate sergeant's orderly (3)
- 7 Having 8 leaves zero tax on business returns (5)
- 8 Their way lacks energy and desire (5)
- 9 Reportedly declines bed panelling (5)
- 10 Latin hero's peculiarly brave one (5)
- 11 One held by the female pirate (5)
- 12 Stand seating delay (5)

Down

- 1 Amusing facts about chape number one that's very orthodox (1,4)
- 2 Varmint costs grow wild growth (7)
- 3 Fishy product's clearly bottled (5)
- 4 Nags to be trained for this? (5)
- 5 It turned up in 12's fancy (5)
- 6 True blue? (5)
- 7 I stain composers and passivity (7)
- 8 Not true flight no longer conforms (7,5,3,2,4)
- 9 Carved patches on monuments (5)



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,164

- 16 Players desert one for singers (8)
- 18 Cut off to get a losing streak back (7)
- 20 Learn about elevator in place of bridge (7)
- 21 Fruit with stems attached (6)
- 22 Place of misery and old greeting (5)

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Alice would draw a loaded pistol from her stomach and fire at the Jabberwocky, blowing its hideous body into smithereens with the words, "Eat lead, Jabberwock!"

Jeff Noon on the climax to his own version of Alice in Wonderland

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